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THE GOSPELS

IN THE
LIGHT OF MODERN RESEARCH.

BY THE

REV. J. R. COHU,

RECTOR OF ASTON CLINTON, BUCKS; SOMETIME FELLOW
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(Author of "*The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Research*";
"*Oremus: or the Place of Prayer in Modern Religious Life*";
"*The Sermon on the Mount*"; "*The Morning Service*";
"*The Ten Commandments.*")

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IN this book, our aim is to place before the reader, in an intelligible form, the present attitude of the Higher Criticism towards the vexed problems of the origin, composition and historical trustworthiness of our four Gospels. Upon this subject, much valuable work has been done within the last twenty years. A flood of light has been poured upon the pages of our Evangelists and their relationship to each other.

In the space at our disposal^a, it is a moral impossibility,—even if it lay within our power,—to deal with such an immense theme as adequately as its intrinsic importance and absorbing interest demand. Our only wish is to give the reader a practical working knowledge of the present position of the critical enquiry into the Gospel-story, and to record the main results achieved by Biblical scholarship.

The skeleton frame-work of the book is simple. In Part I. will be found a plea for a reasonable

^a True, 600 pages! But Prof. Burkitt truly says: "In a work on the Gospels, if I give the several parts the attention they need, I must show you the trees, (and perhaps take you into a thicket,) when you rather want a view of the wood as a whole." Preliminary and collateral investigations leave only 300 pages for the critical examination of *four* Gospels! S. John alone needs twice 300 pages.

criticism of the Bible in the interests of true religion. Part II., or "Gospel Side-Lights," is devoted to sundry preliminary questions which must be investigated before we can approach the main problems of the Gospel-History. Part III. consists of a detailed critical enquiry into the origin, composition and historical value of our Gospels. Part IV.^b gives a supplementary picture of the social, religious and political condition of things in Palestine in our Lord's time. The Appendix glances at some of the deeper questions (e.g. miracles, the Kenosis, the *bodily* Resurrection on the *third* day), which are occupying thinking minds to-day.

Throughout, we have approached each topic from the modern critical standpoint. The historical critic's first task is to clearly define the points at issue. His next step is to collect all the available evidence in any way bearing on these points. He must then weigh the evidence and argue its meaning. Finally he should sum up the case and indicate the *probable* conclusions to which the evidence seems to point. The reader is thus placed in a position to form his own independent judgment, to accept or reject the critic's conclusions. He is in no way

^b Part IV. may seem out of place in a Higher Critical work; yet it is essential (though admittedly too elementary) if we are to reconstruct the background of 30 A.D. Even to-day, many critics are not fair to the Jews. The frequent repetitions in the text are a more serious objection. Our apology is twofold: (a) Few read a book of this nature from cover to cover, (b) all teachers know that repetitions are a necessary evil.

bound to follow the critic's private opinion as to the weight, value, and relevancy of the evidence submitted. The case must be decided on its own merits.

This is the method of historical research. It professes to deal with none but verified facts, and, if the historical critic ventures on a hypothetical statement, he is expected openly to label it as such. There is no doubt that many a hotly-contested controversial question, unduly wounding Christian susceptibilities, would never have been raised if critics had more fully and consistently remembered and recognized these fundamental principles of their own Higher Criticism.

But, it may be objected, historical research is no safe or true guide in Biblical matters. "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned."

This is a fair criticism, and no one can subscribe to this axiom more conscientiously than the present writer. After all is said, "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of Holy Scripture is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness in our hearts" (*Westminster Confession*). The Canonicity and spiritual credentials of our four Gospels lie within themselves and nowhere else. They bear on their face God's own stamp and mint-mark. Our Gospels afford the clearest and best witness to their own Inspiration as containing a revelation and declaration of the Divine Will.

On the other hand, while fully recognizing the unique preciousness and authority of our four Gospels, it is equally clear that the human element—and it is with this that the critic deals—enters largely into their composition. S. Paul himself tells us: “we have this treasure in *earthen* vessels.” Even from the spiritual point of view, our Bible is not all on the same level from cover to cover. A Leviticus or Ecclesiastes does not appeal to us in the same way as a S. John or the Psalms. If not on the “human element” principle, how are we to explain that terrible last verse of one of the grandest Psalms (cxxxvii)? Does the Holy Spirit indite the first six verses of “By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept” from a supernatural height, and drop to a very low plane in the last three with their vindictive blood-thirstiness?

If, then, the human element enters largely into the books of our Bible, if Inspiration does not supersede human knowledge or eliminate human weaknesses, if we believe that neither the Evangelists nor any other inspired holy men of old wrote as passive penmen at God's dictation,—why should we ascribe to inspired writers an infallibility to which they lay no claim? Under the Holy Spirit's guidance, their inner light led them into a true insight of great spiritual truths which they have revealed to us. None the less, the mere fact of Inspiration guarantees neither absolute freedom from error in the record of

historical events, nor absolute finality in the spiritual pronouncements of these inspired men. It is admitted on all hands that there are clear traces of a "progressive revelation" throughout the Bible itself. Surely, this progressiveness did not come to a dead stop with the last chapter of the Bible. If we believe in a guiding Providence at all, Revelation, even as Creation, is a never-ending process going on actively at the present moment. At no point in Finite Time can we say: "This is the last word of God's Revelation."

If this is true, then the too prevalent summary method of brushing aside historical evidence and research as irrelevant, is not so godly as it seems. The dogmatic assertion that God has spoken in His Bible, therefore no more need be said, betokens a praiseworthy jealousy for the honour of God, but betrays more zeal than discretion. Such letter-worship may easily become a snare and a fetter, narrowing a great truth into a cramped dogma, if not into an actual falsehood.

In history, in Nature, in the ever-increasing enlightenment of our own minds and hearts, God is making revelations to us every single day, unveiling Himself to us ever more and more, pouring light upon and interpreting His own Bible. To whom much is given, of him is much required. It is a sin against God wilfully to hide under a bushel the light He gives us, to quench the Holy Spirit Who is guiding us into all truth as we are able to

bear it. Men are eagerly, honestly, fearlessly seeking after Truth to-day as never before, and it is an impertinence and an insult to Him Who is the Truth even to suggest that God's Bible, in so far as it is God's Bible, has anything to fear from an honest and reverent historical investigation into the accuracy of its facts.

Many, we know, are exclaiming that the old Faith is gone and man has invented a new one for himself. Nothing of the kind! Never was the old Faith more alive than to-day, only it is now stated in new terms. It is the old Faith translated into the language of to-day, proclaiming a living message to living men in their own tongue, the only tongue they can understand.

History ever repeats itself. Every true Reformation has, in its day, been denounced as a destructive revolutionary upheaval. In course of time, the new creed seems so clear and so simple that it surprises us we did not adopt it before. With the experience of the past before our eyes, we need not face the religious future with apprehension. Truth has a wondrous way of vindicating itself. "Wisdom is justified of her children." *Partial* views of Truth may fail, but not the Truth itself. Sooner or later the time comes when what is false in the new perishes, and what is true no more seems strange.

Strong in this conviction, we are fully persuaded that the modern movement in favour of a reverent but frank dealing with the Bible in the light of

modern research is altogether in the truest interests of religion and of the Bible itself. At times, minds may fear and hearts may fail when some of our most cherished beliefs seem threatened; but only for a while. We soon discover it is merely "that which decayeth and waxeth old, and is ready to vanish away" that has to go. After criticism has done its best or its worst, all that is true and eternal in the traditional beliefs abides more firmly established than ever on a foundation that cannot be shaken.

This is precisely what has happened with our Gospels. In spite of his more recent disclaimer,—which was amply called for,—Dr. Harnack's prophecy of twelve years ago is daily finding its fulfilment more and more: "A time will come, it is already drawing near, in which men will not trouble themselves much more about the working out of problems of literary history in the region of primitive Christianity, because the essential accuracy of tradition, with a few unimportant exceptions, will have received general assent." True, Harnack's meaning has been so grossly misrepresented that he has felt constrained to qualify his statement. Many traditional views as to the authorship of New Testament books, for instance, are radically wrong and untenable, and must be surrendered. None the less, what Harnack really said and meant has proved true to the very letter. The fact is now generally acknowledged that the result of modern Higher Critical work on the New Testament books has been to shatter the

objections urged against their genuineness, and to substantiate in a wondrous way the traditional views which have always been held by Christians as to their age and character. It is to the Higher Criticism that we owe this immense debt, and not least to Harnack himself. Englishmen as a nation are the last to credit Higher Critics with any virtues, and then only grudgingly and under great pressure. Yet even they must admit that criticism has done us invaluable service in this way. In the matter of our New Testament Books, it has converted into assured convictions traditional views which we had previously to accept on bare trust or Authority. It has made "reason aware of itself that it is reason"; and, looking at the matter from a purely moral and practical standpoint, this is an immense gain. Viewed as active influences and motive forces in a man's life, there is all the difference in the world between solid convictions and shifting opinions. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

In much of what we have said, we are trespassing on the ground of the following chapters, so we shall add no more on this subject.

As already hinted, Part III. consists of a detailed critical examination of our four Gospels. Naturally, the whole question bristles with hard problems. Indeed, in two out of the four Gospels we suggest an open verdict, for the *data* seem too inadequate to do otherwise, especially in the case of "S. John." This

may lay us open to the charge of lack of knowledge and indecision. Both accusations are probably true to fact. At the same time, such large questions as the authorship and historicity of "S. John" must needs be viewed from a severe standpoint, and, above all, in a purely impersonal way. The critic has no right to be a special pleader, even in the interests of his own pet creed ; in fact, such a course borders on immorality. In these complex cases, where the evidence is so inadequate and conflicting, it is not enough to advocate one hypothesis. A number of other rival views may and must be kept before the mind's eye, and their claims fairly and impartially heard. Till fresh light comes, our tentative conclusions should be definitely spoken of as more or less probable rather than as true or untrue.

This method of procedure, however, does not make for lucidity, neither does it satisfy readers who desire clearly-defined views or attractive pages. For the sake of clearness, though at the cost of uniformity and in defiance of our publishers' advice, we have, in Part III. only, prefaced each chapter with a brief argument by way of a clue to the general line of thought.

Although, in this volume, we have rashly resolved "*nullius jurare in verba magistri*," our chief guides have been Sanday, Burkitt, Westcott, and Harnack, —especially Harnack, the apostle of the "dry light" of reason. In his broad, unbiassed judgment we place almost implicit trust. We have consulted

many other authorities, and have endeavoured to acknowledge the fact in the text, though we may not have paid all our debts in full.

Reviewers of previous works,—who have been unduly kind,—have suggested the advisability of an index. Their suggestion we have gladly adopted in this book.

Our standpoint is not extremely radical, neither is it likely to be called very conservative. Many of the opinions herein expressed are sure to be condemned, but a writer is bound to speak with no uncertain sound and as conscience bids him, without disguise, without evasion. As in the "*Old Testament in the light of Modern Research*," our one wish is to help others in their perplexity. We can honestly say we have endeavoured to do this in a spirit of reverence and with the heartfelt and prayerful desire to serve God and His Truth. The achievement is very small, but the ideal was high.

I have (by permission) dedicated this book to the Bishop of Ripon. At his hands I received the Order of Priesthood twenty-five years ago. It was his book on the Bible that opened my eyes, four years ago, to the Higher Critical interpretation of Holy Scripture, confirming my Faith at a time when doubts and perplexities were besetting me on every side. In very many other ways my debt to him is great.

It is only fair to his Lordship to state that, owing to his recent severe illness, he has not read a single

line of this work. All the more keenly do I appreciate the trust he reposes in me, but I do not wish him to be held responsible for any of my views. No doubt, there is much in this book which he would not endorse. At the same time, I sincerely hope nothing in these pages is of such a nature as to make him regret his gracious permission to accept the dedication.

J. R. COHU.

ASTON CLINTON,
August, 1909.

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ERRATA.

p. 9, l. 13, *for* 'his handwriting' *read* 'His handwriting.'

p. 107, l. 15, *for* 'all that Peter had remembered (or mentioned)'
read 'all that he remembered (or that he [Peter] mentioned).'

PART I.

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- (3) Its own reasonableness. (Chap. III.)

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTIAN FAITH IN RELATION TO MODERN THOUGHT.

“IT is within the memory of some now living that a certain Professor in Edinburgh was suspended from his office because he would not subscribe to a form of Bibliolatry which implied that the Bible came straight down from heaven, with its scientific and historical facts, chronology, headings to chapters and all. It is not so long ago that considerable opposition was shown to the Revision of the text of the Bible on like grounds. In the minds of a vast number of people, criticism of the Bible has been equivalent to an attack on their Faith, because to them every word of the Bible was divinely inspired and equally infallible. And a younger generation, finding many former views erroneous or even absurd, are inclined to give up all belief. Some are sensibly disturbed, and ask the old question, What then is Truth? Others simply pass to tacit Agnosticism^a.”

We quote this passage because it exactly illustrates three attitudes of mind at the present day towards the Bible: (1) The old evangelical position, (2) The Liberal theologian, (3) The “troubled and perplexed.”

^a *Academy* (Aug. 29, 1908) Review of “Old Testament in the Light of Modern Research.”

(1) *The old evangelical position.*

The spirit of Bibliolatry is far from dead amongst us even now, and the belief that the Bible, "from cover to cover," is verbally inspired, and "came straight down from heaven," is not confined to simple-minded pious souls. Not a few highly-educated religious-minded men, on opening their Bibles, unconsciously force themselves into a mental attitude which is foreign to them at all other times.

They read God's Book as they read no other book, with a strange mixture of devoutness and a sub-conscious stifling of thought. To them S. Paul's words, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. iii. 19, ii. 5, 6), are so true that they experience a sense of self-reproach if they allow their human intelligence to question the Bible's science and history,—still more its moral teaching,—according to the ordinary canons which they unhesitatingly apply elsewhere. In their eyes, the Bible stands on a plane far above the sphere of human reason. It is an impertinence and a sin to interpret Scripture as "man's wisdom teacheth." Self-condemned if they do not gather spiritual refreshment from the study of each verse of Holy Writ, their intellectual honesty often convicts them of partial failure. Why this failure? Their curious theory of Inspiration supplies a ready answer: "spiritual things are spiritually discerned," and they are reading God's Word with the head and not the heart.

What then? As an act of faith, prompted by the highest motives, they automatically hypnotize their normal intelligence, and even their moral sense^b. In this abnormal state, they find themselves forthwith in perfect intellectual and moral sympathy with Bible-incidents which they would be the first to discredit or condemn anywhere outside its pages.

It does not strike them as anomalous, in the least, to read Holy Writ in this strained unnatural manner. It is a supernatural Book. It does not merely *enshrine* God's Word: every syllable of it *is* God's Word. If its history, miracles, or Inspiration are unlike anything in human experience, what of that? "God's ways are not our ways, neither are His thoughts our thoughts." The Bible contains the history of God's Chosen People, and God Himself takes an active personal part in it. On Israel's behalf, God constantly intervenes in the course of human affairs, and, as we may expect, by isolated acts of extraordinary power. The miracles of the Bible are thus a matter of course. They are "acts of God."

So with Bible Inspiration. The inspired writers are the mouthpieces of God, His penmen. The message they deliver is in nowise their own. Every word they write at His dictation. If Inspiration has ceased absolutely nowadays, it is because God's

^b Exaggerated as this may sound, "we speak of that we know." It is autobiographical.

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last word to man has long since been said. With the last page of the Bible, His message is complete.

Now, if we thus set the Bible in complete isolation, if we regard the revelation of God as one small chapter in the world's history, if we treat the Bible as a supernatural volume which has come down from heaven in its entirety, a book dealing with times and circumstances when other laws obtained than those of to-day, our attitude towards the Bible is vastly simplified. Its interpretation is now an easy matter, for a God-dictated Word saves us all the trouble of personal thought. At one stroke, all possibility of doubt as to the truth of Holy Scripture in matters of detail is eliminated.

Another result follows as a corollary. If the Bible is God's dictated Word, then the application of the findings of modern research to the Old Testament, and especially to the Gospels, borders on profanity. The Higher Criticism becomes "a philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." It is a system of interpretation "made in Germany," posing as the true friend of Scripture, yet its deadliest foe.

(2) *Modern liberalism in theology.*

We shall now look at the other side of the picture. Profound as is their admiration for the piety and consistent lives of their more fortunate

brethren, who can thus read their Bible untroubled and unperplexed, there are numbers who cannot throttle thought, or fetter their minds at will, and would not if they could. Trained in the modern historical school of exact thought, they have been taught never to tamper with facts, conceal difficulties, slur over inconsistencies, nor overstate convictions, even in matters of faith. Impatient of half-truths, they prefer to suspend their judgment where no solid basis of evidence is to be found, to wait patiently till new light comes. It might save them the trouble of personal thought and many a painful doubt, could they but read God's Word with the heart only, and not with the understanding, but—even were it feasible—such a course would degrade them in their own eyes, blunt their conscience, and hurt their soul. More than this, to read God's Word in this (to them) unreal and unnatural way would put them out of all practical and vital touch with Holy Scripture. They are persuaded that this artificial buttressing of the Bible, in order to sustain its Divine character, is not only totally uncalled for, but signally defeats its own ends, and for the following reason.

The history recorded in the Bible admits of two possible interpretations, and two only. Either Israel's history followed the ordinary lines of natural development, or it did not. If the latter supposition be true, and Israel developed under abnormal conditions in a miraculous way, then there is an end

of the whole matter. The Bible-story of Israel's life has nothing to say to us. It is altogether out of touch with our own life. They witnessed constant miracles ; they were miraculously guided and enlightened at critical periods of their existence. We do not expect God and His Angels visibly to interpose on our behalf in this miraculous fashion, neither do we see it done on this wise. Israel's experience therefore can bring us neither encouragement nor practical help in our hour of need, as S. Paul would have us believe (Rom. xv. 4).

If, on the other hand, Israel (like ourselves) passed through the various stages of its education, its moral and religious development under perfectly normal conditions, then our course is plain. We are bound, for our own example and guidance, to investigate the facts presented to us in the Bible, and bring them, as much as possible, into harmony with God's ordinary methods of government as revealed to us in history and nature. We shall see in the Bible, not a mere store-house of proof-texts, but a living Book "written for our learning." We shall see in the inspired writers not only chroniclers of Israel's past, but serious men in deadly earnest whose one object is religion rather than history, men who care more for the making of saints and true children of our Father in Heaven than for an exact record of facts.

To the Hebrew mind truth of idea appeals far more than truth of literal fact. Essentially practical

and religious, the Old Testament Prophet deals with the history of the Jews even as S. John deals with the Ministry of Christ. He interprets and idealizes it by the light of enlightened experience^c. "Thou leddest Thy people by the hand of Moses and Aaron." This is the standpoint from which Hebrew prophets and psalmists face history. They see God, Love Divine, behind it all, as its driving power and its key. Their whole aim is to portray Jehovah as a righteous God, the moral Governor of the Universe, a lover of righteousness and a hater of iniquity, and Israel's history is an open page in which they can clearly read his handwriting.

Realizing that the inspired Old Testament writers are spiritual teachers far more than chroniclers, we have in our hands the clue to the visible walking of God with men on earth, His miraculous interpositions on Israel's behalf, and the idealization of Hebrew history generally. Strange as it may seem to us who regard facts as sacred, this deliberate Hebrew sacrifice of truth of fact to truth of idea is a high ideal.

And does not the modern view of the Bible, which regards it, not as a scientific or historical primer, but essentially a moral and spiritual guide, involve a far higher conception of God and His

^c "Interest in pure history did not exist among the writers of antiquity, certainly not among the writers of the East. What we call a historical conscience is a modern discovery. In Hebrew historical literature, the past was seen in the light of the present and the future."
Von Soden, Books of the New Testament.

Book than the old traditional Bibliolatry? It makes altogether for a closer walk with God. It breaks down the barrier which separates the Bible from the life of to-day. It opens the pages of the Bible once more, as a source of spiritual light, practical encouragement and help to thousands who, troubled and perplexed, were beginning to abandon its study. They did not actually question the presence of the Divine element in it, but it was a hopeless puzzle to them. How could a God-dictated Bible be anything but perfect? yet it so often went counter to their idea of history, and not unfrequently offended their moral sense^d.

(3) *The "troubled and perplexed."*

This naturally brings us to our third class of Bible-readers, the "troubled and perplexed," who have got detached from their old evangelical position and have not yet fallen into line with the modern school of theological thought, or perhaps cannot reconcile it with their conscience to take that step.

There are many nowadays, brought up from childhood to regard the Bible as the authoritative and infallible Word of God, who halt between the modernist van and the evangelical rear, puzzled and

^d "There are multitudes of good, earnest souls who do love the light, but have been forced into unbelief by the cruel demand that they must accept every word of the Bible as coming direct from God, or reject the whole. . . . There never were so many, in all the history of the Church, crying out, 'Where am I?' as there are to-day." *Dr. J. Mouro Gibson.*

bewildered. Gladly would they believe the Bible's message true, but, with growing minds and wider knowledge, their traditional faith in its infallibility has evaporated into a feeling of doubt and uncertainty which is to them a source of sadness and anxiety. Questioning the abiding value of the Bible, they feel like sailors off a dangerous coast who have lost all faith in their chart and compass. Where can they now turn for guidance? What are they to do? Their old guides are proved wrong and misleading. On one side stand God and His Bible, on the other, the verified facts of history, science and nature. On many points these seem to contradict each other flatly. With mingled feelings of irritation and sadness, they begin to question the truths they learnt at their mother's knee. They turn to theological works for guidance, and at first find some help, but their educated habits of thought soon suggest the uncomfortable feeling that the orthodox pleas for many difficulties which puzzle them (e.g., the wholesale murder of the Amalekites, or the imprecatory Psalms), need too much ingenuity, and that simple truth should scarcely require so much special pleading. They can see for themselves that the Bible is not all on the same level. *Ecclesiastes* reads like the work of a sceptical pessimist. There may be a deep spiritual meaning in *Solomon's Song*, but it is hidden behind a screen of erotic and sensuous imagery. The story of *Esther* has all the appearance of a historical romance, and

the ritual codes of *Leviticus* look like so many sections taken out of the religious books of Babylon. If theologians insist that they must accept every word of Holy Scripture as God-inspired or reject the whole, if it has to be "a whole Bible or no Bible," only one course is open to them. They cannot accept on bare Authority opinions which their reason cannot endorse and convert into personal convictions. Their hearts pull in one direction, their heads in another, and they cannot see their way to fly in the face of verified facts and force their reason to walk in step with their hearts.

And who is to blame them? Why should they force their convictions? God does not require it at their hands. On our generation He has graciously bestowed greater knowledge and a wider outlook than our forefathers possessed. These are talents He has lent us to profit withal: "to whom much is given, of him is much required." If increase of knowledge has created new problems and a temper of scepticism, the advance of education is rapidly enabling us to understand and measure these problems, while our very spiritual difficulties are not all loss. These doubts we so deplore are positive aids to faith. They stimulate and quicken faith into life by compelling us to review the truths we learnt in childhood, and, by personal thought and experience, bring them into harmony with the life, light and thought of the age in which we live,

move and have our being. Origen weightily remarks: "the Divine Word ordered some stumbling-blocks and stones of offence in the sacred records, that we might not be led away by the unalloyed attractiveness of the narration, and seek for nothing more divine" (*Philoc.* I. 15). We should be the last to quarrel with the temper of an age which constrains us to consecrate our entire faculties to the study of the Bible, to investigate it in the full light of modern research, a light more than sufficient to turn our doubts into truer and deeper faith, so as to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us."

At any rate, we cannot alter the temper of our age or put back the hands of the intellectual clock. As Dr. Sanday truly says: "to each generation as it comes, its theology should be offered in the language it can best understand. We should not break our continuity with the past, neither should we attempt to stereotype that past. It is like the case of the ideas which a dutiful son inherits from his father. He will start from them, and try all he can to make them his own, but he will not be bound by them in the sense that his ultimate statement, at the end of all his trying, will not deviate from them to the right hand or to the left."

And it is precisely because a time has come upon us when we realize we must each do our own thinking, if it is to be sincere, that we welcome the spirit of modern religious Liberalism and plead for

it in the interests of the victims of the age,—the many troubled and perplexed,—and in the interests of true religion itself. If we are to save twentieth century men and women, we must show our generation that the old Bible has a message for *them* in their own language. It is we ourselves, the Church of God, and not God's Bible, that are responsible for much of the scepticism we deplore. We insist on presenting God's Truth in a hard dogmatic way. We cling to the traditional antiquated theology prescribed by Authority fifteen centuries back, and refuse to review it in the newer and fuller light which the Holy Spirit has poured upon us in the interval. So it is that we fail to persuade and convince "them that are without," because we will not take the trouble to show men how essentially reasonable God's Bible and Christianity really are in themselves.

We indulge in laments that men no longer read their Bible as in the days of old, when it was the daily companion and daily bread of our forefathers, their one unfailing source of comfort and strength in every emergency. All this is changed now, and we wonder why or how this change has come about. We forget the mental revolution the last sixty years have witnessed. We forget the vast extension in our knowledge in every department, the many discoveries science has made. We forget how widely the scientific temper of our age separates us from our more simple-minded forefathers. We forget that

it is all but impossible for a twentieth century reader to be equally in touch as his fathers were with a history of Israel which relates how the sea was turned into dry land as soon as Moses "stretched out his hand over it"; how the heavens rained manna, or the Rock, at the stroke of a rod, gave forth water; how the Sun and Moon stood still, or city-walls fell flat at the sound of a trumpet and the great shout of the people; how God not only spoke to Moses, as friend speaks to friend, but with His finger wrote laws upon two tables of stone; how God ate with Abraham in his tent, wrestled with Jacob, or "walked in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day." Modern readers feel it hard to understand what all this means. How can they, till some clue is placed in their hands which will unravel these hard sayings?

Harder still is it for the modern reader to fathom the moral problems of the Bible. He naturally asks: How can a loving heavenly Father have hardened Pharaoh's heart merely to show forth His own power? How can the Holy Spirit have inspired the Psalmist to pronounce a blessing on whoso should take his enemies' children and dash their heads against the stones? How can God approve of deed after deed narrated in His Bible, as done by His servants in His Name, deeds which our conscience condemns and must condemn?

These are some of the doubts and questions troubling the hearts of men around us to-day on

the right hand and on the left^e. These are a few of the difficulties creating a yawning gulf between minds athirst for God and a right understanding of the Bible.

We know how this gulf is to be spanned, yet we do not bridge it. Why? Because, timid victims to unworthy fears, we have not the frankness and courage to speak out for dread of unsettling people's faith.

God has taught us that we are to read our Bible for moral and spiritual instruction, and not as a science or history primer. For us to know how many knives were brought back from Babylon matters not one jot, but it does matter whether we note or ignore the great moral and spiritual principles our Bible unfolds. God has taught us, too, that "we have this treasure (i.e., His Word) in earthen vessels," written by men who shared the limitations of their generation. Yet we are afraid to hint at the human element in the Bible for fear of leading people to question its supernatural infallibility. So we continue to preach belief in the Mosaic authorship of the Hexateuch, or in the historical accuracy of Genesis; we refrain from asking men to lay less stress on matters of Bible detail, which are often wrong, and to focus their gaze more on its great truths and principles, which are eternally

^e "Concentrate our attention upon the Bible being 'all right on the whole' as we will, there is no hiding its gross animalism, its wicked stories, its occasional blasphemy." *John P. Hopps.—Hibbert Journal, Oct. 1908.*

true,—convinced that, if we surrender one plank, the whole religious platform will collapse, and men's belief in God fall with it. Thus we go on day by day fastening burdens on men's shoulders which we ourselves are unable to bear.

Unsettle men's faith, forsooth, and weaken their belief in God and His Bible! The minds of tens of thousands are unsettled already, and their faith is crumbling to pieces by reason of our cowardly and guilty silence.

When shall we have the moral courage to follow in the steps of Christ, and do as He did with the Jews of His day? History ever repeats itself. What Englishmen are doing to-day, the Jews were doing in precisely the same way 1900 years ago. They allowed the letter of the Bible to override its spirit, and were positively certain that every single precept of the Mosaic Law had been dictated by God and was binding to all eternity. We shall see in our next chapter how our Lord consistently and steadfastly set His face against the worship of the letter of the Bible, and openly contradicted the traditional view that the Mosaic Law was of eternal obligation. With His repeated "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old . . . but *I* say unto you" (R.V.), He exasperated the ecclesiastical leaders of His day by His plain speaking and broad interpretation of their Old Testament on purely moral lines. He proved to them convincingly in His strictures on laws dealing with Sabbath obser-

vance, divorce, clean and unclean meats, that it is wrong for a more advanced age to be content with a literal interpretation of precepts which were given to and meant for their ruder forefathers, even if the laws and their interpretation are in the Bible. He showed them that theology cannot possibly be unchanging, for in everything that has life, in nature (S. Mark iv. 26 sqq.), in history (S. Mark iv. 30 sqq.), in morals (S. Mark x. 5), in religion (S. Mark ii. 22), in the Bible itself (S. Matt. v. 17), there is a gradual growth, a progressive development following a perfectly natural course. Then as now, men thought and openly said that such attempts to bring Scripture into vital touch with the highest needs of the day were a betrayal of the faith once delivered to the saints, an unfaithful tampering with the sacred deposit of revealed truth. Christ clearly proves that, on the contrary, the new is the ideal fulfilling of the old. "I am come, not to destroy, but to fulfil."

That was ever Christ's way, and it must be ours. There comes a day when for God's herald it is a sin to be silent, and to stand still is death. Christ identified Himself with man's social, moral and religious progress, so must we.

But one thing Christ did which modern would-be reformers are apt to forget. He came more to fulfil than to destroy. He did not attempt or wish to create a brand-new theology and snap the threads linking men with their past. He, Who is the Source of Life, knew its secret. He knew that

man's religion, like man himself, is a living organism with its roots deep down in the past. If it is to go on living and thriving amid new surroundings, it must have the vitality to take up and assimilate the new ideas. It must adapt itself to its environment, retaining all the while a living continuity with the past out of which it has sprung. This it will never do if you tamper with its roots. Therefore He lopped off all the dead branches of the tree, pruned its growing twigs, grafted on new living wood, but never interfered with its roots.

Christ was a Teacher of men, as well as a Reformer. If our Lord had spread out a novel field of unfamiliar truths before the Jews, He might have led them to argue and speculate, but He could not have aroused their consciences by convicting them of sinning against the truth they already knew. And, by showing them that He did not ask them to break with their past, He also avoided a great and obvious danger—that of plunging those who listened to Him into the depths of scepticism or moral indifference. Only the strongest moral natures survive the shock of doubt which dispossesses them of all they have trusted from childhood. It is the old in the new which saves it from doing more harm than good.

His attitude towards men, institutions, the Old Testament itself, was ever one and the same. He ruthlessly assailed error, but He was even more careful to reveal and foster the innate good that

was there, and make it more healthy and fruitful by His whole-hearted recognition and approval of it.

Christ's method of denouncing the evil comes naturally and easily to us. We are not so quick to follow Him in recognizing and commending that which is good in what we condemn. "I am come, not to destroy, but to fulfil." We are more prone to destroy than to fulfil.

But, with this all-important caution, it is our bounden duty to God and man to bring our theology into line with the highest moral and intellectual needs of our day, just as it is the duty of science to take new and larger forms as the years pass by and its knowledge and horizon widen. True, the great underlying facts of Religion and Revelation remain stedfastly the same throughout all ages and changes, so do the great underlying facts of nature. But, from generation to generation, man's interpretations of these facts vary. They grow more luminous and complete as God's Holy Spirit guides us more and more into all truth. The theology of to-day can no more be the theology of yesterday, than the science of to-day is the science of yesterday. At no point can man crystallize theology and say "This is its last word." This would mean that we shared the omniscience of God Himself, and needed no more of His light.

After all, at any given stage of our progress, we

only know in part. We only know our current interpretation of God's Revelation, and the scientific theory of the moment regarding His Universe. There is more, far more beyond. It is only by bracing ourselves from age to age to meet new modes of thought as they arise, only by voicing the new needs and convictions of men's inmost hearts, that either our Theology or our Church can keep alive, can keep in touch with the men of to-day, preaching a living message full of real meaning to our generation, a message which the world cannot possibly do without. Each age, each individual must work out its own salvation. This it can only do, or, at any rate, best do, by living its own life, cherishing the ideas and beliefs that are the outgrowth of its own time, and incorporating therewith whatever is living and abiding in the inheritance bequeathed to it by the life and thought of the past.

Here, for us, is the line of life. We want no break, no gap, no snapping of the threads which link us with the past. Our religion must have its roots in the past, yet nourish men in the present world. Not till the Church learns to spell out the Bible's eternal truths, translated into modern language and modern thought, will she again obtain a hearing of her message, and both win the age for God and a wider knowledge of the truth for herself. She must proclaim the same message, but she must speak it out with inspiration, with fidelity,

with power, by the light which God is pouring on the Bible's pages to-day, not by the light of 1500 years ago. Then once more will the people hear her gladly, as they heard her Master. Her message—which is His—will once more supply them with the only clue which gives a meaning and a purpose to a world that otherwise would be without any real significance.

But, it will be asked, plausible as this liberalism in religion may sound, is it not beset with grave dangers? May it not be that, in our frantic zeal to appear enlightened, broad-minded, progressive, abreast of the times, we may concede vital points? "It is possible to avoid the Scylla of ecclesiasticism, only to fall into the Charybdis of an opportunism which sacrifices everything on the altar of expediency."

This is Rome's plea, and her reply to the Lambeth Encyclical. In 1908, there appeared almost simultaneously two important official documents dealing with "Christian Faith in relation to Modern Thought," viz. the Lambeth Encyclical and the Papal Encyclical *Pascendi*. Our own Church, through 240 of her Bishops, welcomes Modernism; Rome anathematizes it as the spirit of Anti-christ, subversive of all faith and reverence, infecting the leaven of Truth with the deadly poison of error.

This is the verdict of the Pan-Anglican Confer-

ence: "We are bound by our principles to look with confidence and hope on the progress of Modern Thought. It is our duty to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, which is the secret of life. And at the same time it is our duty to learn all that God is teaching through the studies and discoveries of our contemporaries, whether inside or outside the Church,—discerning, indeed, the spirits, whether they be of God, but bending with reverent teachableness to the influence of His Spirit, from whatever quarter He may breathe upon us."

Rome replies with apparently unanswerable logic:—Compromise with Modernism and you tamper with God's revealed Truth. The Bible is one organic whole, which together stands or falls. The whole scheme of salvation hinges on the one cardinal truth: 'Since by man came death, by man came also the Resurrection of the dead.' Surrender to-day the story of Adam and Eve as a mere myth, or even a parable, and where will you stop? You jettison together with it the unity of the human race: the original innocence of man; original sin as the fruit of man's disobedience; the revealed origin of carnal appetites, suffering, death itself; and, of necessity, you consequently surrender all need of redemption, together with the gracious promise of a Redeemer made to man at the moment of the Fall. You wilfully and sinfully capitulate all the elements, all the principles, all the vital truths of the Christian Faith. It is all well and

good for educated Protestants thus to try and give the right hand of fellowship to Christ and Modernism at the same time, to concede the mythical character of the first chapters of Genesis while protesting that their faith in the Redemption of the Cross runs in orthodox grooves. The thing cannot be done. You cannot thus pick and choose. You cannot thus arbitrarily give this portion of God's Word a fixed and absolute value, and assign to others a merely floating and relative importance. If the Bible is not to be trusted and obeyed to the very letter, how is it to retain that virtue and authority which your own Westminster Confession ascribes to it, and be regarded as the final court of appeal in all controversies of religion? Holy Scripture stands or falls together. If you sap the foundations of any part of its fabric, the entire edifice will totter and eventually crumble into a heap of ruins.

This sounds logical and consistent, but is it true? If it is, then even our Lord stands self-condemned, for He cuts across both these statements of Rome. As already hinted, (1) He set His face against letter-worship; (2) He would not accept the plea that the true doctrine was unchanging.

In our next chapter we propose to examine at length our Lord's attitude to the Old Testament, and endeavour to show that the whole tenor of our Lord's Teaching was progressive, and that He fully sanctions the principles of reasonable historical criticism.

CHAPTER II.

CHRIST'S ATTITUDE TO RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM AND BIBLE CRITICISM.

WE believe that it is possible to prove, from the tenor of His Life and Work, that our Lord was a "progressive" in religion, and sanctions the principles of reasonable Bible Criticism.

(A) *Was Christ a Liberal in Religion?*

Before we can estimate the true place and influence of Christ in the evolution of human thought, we must reconstruct His contemporary background and see both the Man and His Work in their historical setting.

This does *not* mean that we can give a naturalistic interpretation of Christ's unique Personality in terms of His environment. He mastered and moulded circumstances to do His bidding ; it was not circumstances that created His Personality.

Yet it would be a mistake, even in the case of Christ, to fancy that He stood in no sort of relationship or indebtedness to His surroundings. Christ was "the Word made Flesh," but He chose to be born a Jew of Palestine. Only by a freak of the imagination can we isolate our Lord, dissociate Him from the place and time of His appearance on earth,

and approach His Life and Work as if their character would have been precisely the same had he lived in England or Germany, instead of Judæa and Galilee. We must view the Ministry of Christ in the light of the Jewish history, the Jewish ideas, the moral and spiritual atmosphere of the Palestine of 30 A.D. They colour His thoughts, words and deeds.

What, then, was the state of things in Palestine in His day? What stage in its evolution had Israel reached? Its life-story, as told in the Bible, discloses the successive stages, the progressive development in the moral and spiritual education of a remarkable people. The trend of development, here as elsewhere, is on the whole a forward movement, but the advance is marked by a curious mixture of ebb and flow. There are receding as well as advancing waves in its tide.

It was during one of the periods of retrogression that Christ was born. The tide seemed on the ebb, for the nation was still caught in the backwash of a tidal wave that had left its high-water mark far and away beyond the point reached by any of its predecessors.

Some centuries prior to Christ, there had arisen a succession of prophets, great personalities such as Amos, Hosea, the two Isaiahs, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, spiritual giants who dwarfed all that went before or after them for many a generation.

They were Israel's moral and religious saviours and reformers. Their ideas, hopes and aspirations

are entirely phenomenal. So highly-enlightened are their ideals, their picture of God and His relationship to man, that, even to-day, after twenty centuries of Christian teaching, our souls are drawn out to these canonical Prophets. As we read the two Isaiahs, we instinctively feel that all that is best and noblest in us is being forcibly appealed to by a noble spirit akin to that of Christ Himself. Their God is the very God Whom Christ reveals, a loving Father, righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works, a God Who is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. From first to last, their pure and lofty moral teaching makes rightness of life a matter of the heart, and welds together love of God and love of man in a bond that cannot be broken. Their creed is: "What doth the Lord require of thee but to love mercy, to do justly, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

One other great service these prophets rendered to mankind. They were ever pointing to a "golden age" of prosperity, peace and joy. Other nations had dreamed of such a bright era, but always as a thing of the past. The Hebrew prophets hail it, not as lying behind, but ahead of them. They hail it as men hail the dawn, nothing doubting but that the night and the things of the night are shortly to pass away, swallowed up in the glorious light of the perfect day. This golden age is to dawn, not for Jews only, but for all Gentiles as well. These prophets burst all narrow local barriers. God's Will

is that all men, heathen nations included, shall share in this glorious consummation, the Divine goal for **which all humanity is making.**

Clearly, then, these great prophets stand for progress. Forerunners of Christ, they have already, as we have seen, foreshadowed His revelation of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. In their "golden age," they faintly anticipate our Lord's "Kingdom of God."

But this ideal teaching was too high for the degenerate Israel of the day. It fell on deaf ears and dull hearts (Is. vi. 9, 10).

We know the sequel. God had tried to soften the hardness of Hebrew hearts by His long-suffering kindness, He now purifies them with the fire of affliction in Captivity. Sternness succeeds where love had failed. The Jews come back from Exile chastened and purified by the fiery ordeal through which they have passed, full of a deep religious earnestness.

They have learnt their lesson, and taken it to heart. Of one fact they are firmly convinced: their Captivity has been due to their neglect and disobedience of God's Law in the past. Into this sin they are resolved not to relapse.

In their feverish anxiety not to disobey the law, they rush to the opposite extreme, and exalt the letter of the Law into a fetish. Their one ideal now is to "make a fence about the Law," so that no one

can possibly break out of bounds and go astray. Keenly alive to his personal responsibility for all that he now does or leaves undone, the pious Jew yearns for some hard and fast code of rules to hedge his duties round at every moment of his life, and make their performance sure. His spiritual pastors and masters, the scribes, supply this need. Not only do they interpret and expound every verse of the Mosaic Law, they do more than this. By a close and life-long study of its minutest details, and in a spirit that the most subtle Jesuit casuist would have envied, they work out its application so as to meet beforehand every possible contingency which can occur in life. The people gladly welcome this Priestly Code and its traditional glosses as a relief and not a burden. It raises them above all possibility of a mistake.

Originally the expression of a deep religious earnestness, and intended to be helpful, these rules of holy living soon become a snare. They degenerate into a mere routine. Isaiah's preaching of rightness of life and a worship of the heart gives place to a rigid observance of rules. All that God now requires is a due performance of the correct ritual services and the proper sacrifices. If men wish to please Him still more, all that is needed is to redouble the sacrifices and the services. An exaggerated value is attached once more (cf. Amos v., Is. i.) to Temple, priests, fasts and feasts, ceremonial, tithes, meat and drink offerings, Sabbaths, new-moons, even to the cooking-pots of the Temple.

All the ennobling ideals, living truths, inspiring principles, heartfelt worship of an Isaiah or Jeremiah seem to be forgotten. The legal spectre of religionism has cast its gloomy shadow over Judaism and destroyed these noble ideals by translating them into set forms, crystallized these living truths into dead dogmas, degraded these inspiring principles into inelastic rules, this heart-worship into a mere routine of outward observances.

Can we wonder that, with the freedom of the spirit sacrificed to the bondage of the letter, heart-religion and true morality recede more and more into the background? A form of creed which renders it easy for a man to make terms with his conscience and his God, according to a fixed scale of purifications and propitiations regulated by a tariff prescribed for every conceivable case that may arise; a religion which regards the relationship between God and man as founded on a kind of legal contract, so that a punctilious attention to sundry rules and ceremonial formalities is all that God requires, and brings its sure reward; a religion which makes it possible to acquire merit and excel in God's eyes by obeying its precepts even beyond what is nominated in the bond,—such a religion can produce but one effect upon the mass^a of its votaries; it will beget habitual

^a As the Psalmists abundantly attest, and such persons as Simeon, Nicodemus, the young ruler, the “scribe not far from the kingdom of God,” and many more, there was ever a large ‘remnant’ in Israel who found the Law a help and not a hindrance, and lived under it saintly lives.

hypocrisy. Human nature is too frail not to take advantage of a creed which makes it so easy to serve two masters.

Here we have a period of retrogression.

This was the state of things when Christ appeared. In the religious historical background stood the Prophets with their progressive principles; before His eyes was contemporary Judaism and its reactionary programme.

To these two factors Christ must relate Himself, and towards the Prophets He naturally takes up an attitude of appreciation and sympathy.

But what attitude is Christ to adopt towards contemporary Judaism? He knows that the Mosaic Law with its Priestly Code is deadening men's consciences, demoralizing the nation, setting up a wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, Jew and Jew, Jew and God Himself. Worse still, He sees that both priests and people regard it as the unchanging and unchangeable deposit of revealed Truth, the faith once for all delivered to the saints. They claim for it an absolute finality, the divine right to remain the one and only true Theology for ever and ever. In reality it is, as He knows, a sad departure from the path of progress; it means stagnation and death.

All this Christ realizes; yet *that*, and nothing else, is the material on which He has to work. He sees clearly what is possible, and what is impos-

sible for Him to do in those short three years. He foresees that any radically sweeping attempts at outward social and religious reforms will not only alienate all sympathy, unsettle faith, and arouse overwhelming opposition, but inevitably prove worse than useless to the cause He has at heart. He is resolved to set about the reform of Judaism, but by the leaven that works from within outwards. He means to create a new moral world, but the heart of His new world is new men and women leavened by His own Spirit.

Above all, there must be no break with the past. There is no need for it. He sees a clear line of development in Judaism from the days of Moses to His own day, and He does not break off at a tangent from its line of continuity. He sets His face towards the direction in which that line travels. In the priceless heritage of the Prophets, in the moral principles underlying the Law itself, He sees the threads connecting the Israel of the past and present with its better future. Nay, He does not confine Himself to the Old Testament period. The two centuries before His Advent have proved a fertile seed-plot. Whole-heartedly He accepts what is true and promising in the current Apocalyptic ideas of the Kingdom of God and its Messiah.

Thus Christ puts Himself sympathetically in touch with everything in the Law, the Prophets, and Apocalyptic literature which appeals to Him. He has the feeling of what is true, progressive

and eternal amid a mass of local and temporary material, and He enunciates it with Divine emphasis. "I am come, not to destroy, but to fulfil."

He takes the progressive elements of Prophetic teaching and reaffirms them, often in the prophets' own words. But they had only been partial statements of the truth. He completes them by bringing their scattered rays to a focus, still further illuminating them with a bright light of His own creation.

So with the Law. The Priestly Code is not so lifeless that it is not worth resuscitating. The Mosaic Law is full of healthy life. It is the traditional glosses of men that are choking it. They must go.

In the Apocalyptic ideas of Messiah and His Kingdom, Jesus found current beliefs and hopes regarding the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth, the coming of Messiah, the day of judgment and individual resurrection, far in advance of anything in the Old Testament. With much of the Apocalyptic teaching Christ was in sympathy, though some of its materialism repelled Him. He adopted its ideas and language, and in adopting it, transmuted its clay into gold, giving a moral, spiritual, and world-wide meaning to an eschatological doctrine which, in His day, was only (or mainly) interpreted in a material, temporary, and local sense^b.

^b It is not too much to say that the "Kingdom of God" is the moral foundation on which all that is best in our modern civilization

This is what we mean by saying that Christ was nothing if not liberal and progressive in His Spirit and Teaching. "As a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, bringing out of His treasures things new and old," He takes into account both the new and the old, understands both, adapts the old to the new, thus bringing it perfectly into line with the highest moral and spiritual needs of His own day.

(B) *Our Lord sanctions the principles of reasonable Bible Criticism.*

Our Lord's attitude towards the Old Testament may be described as: (1) conservative; (2) liberal; (3) critical.

(1) *Conservative.* -

Speaking generally, Christ recognized the Old Testament as enshrining God's revealed Word, and therefore, as invested with indefeasible authority. He expressed His sense of the authority of Holy Scripture in the strongest possible language: "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." (S. Matth. v. 17, 18; S. Luke xvi. 17.)

How deeply our Lord was influenced in His personal life by the Old Testament, and found therein the food which nourished His spiritual life, has been built, yet consider what it meant to the Jews, or even to the first generation of Christians!

is proved by the frequency of His quotations from it. He seems to live in it, to steep His very soul in its spirit. Its words are on His lips at every turn. In critical moments of His Life His thoughts find their natural expression in its language. We see it at the hour of His Temptation, and even when He hangs upon the Cross. In religious matters, it is His final court of appeal. He appeals to it in defence of His own conduct (S. Mark ii. 25). He quotes Isaiah as a crushing reply to the Pharisees, and refutes the Sadducees in the words of Exodus. He explicitly claims that He has come, not to destroy, but to fulfil the Law and the Prophets. When the young ruler asks Him what he must do to inherit eternal life, He imparts no new teaching of His own, but simply refers him to the Ten Commandments. And, in the parable, when Dives begs that one from the dead be sent to warn his five brethren, what is the reply? "They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them."

(2) *Liberal.*

But although our Lord says of the Law that not the dot of an i nor the stroke of a t can be cancelled by any power on earth, we must give such a sense to His words as will harmonize them with His practice and His other expression: "It hath been said to them of old . . . but *I* say unto you."

In actual practice, as we see in S. Mark vii. 1—23,

S. Matth. xv. 1—20, Jesus completely cuts across the Law of Moses as to clean and unclean meats, and the observance of various ritual purifications by washing.

What our Lord clearly means by the strong expression in S. Matth. v. 17, 18 is that the Law and the Prophets are God's Word, and, as such, must be fulfilled. This general statement, couched in current Hebrew hyperbole (cf. S. Matth. v. 29—42) is one which any public speaker will readily understand, and in nowise inconsistent with the attitude of freedom and independence which our Lord invariably adopts towards the Law.

In the Mosaic Law, as we shall see in our next section, Christ distinguishes between its weightier matters,—love, righteous judgment, mercy and faith,—and its more trivial applications, such as the “tithing of mint, rue, anise, cummin, and all manner of herbs” (S. Matth. xxiii. 23). Of this law and that (e.g. divorce) He asserts it was the best the Jews of former days were able to receive, “because of the hardness of their hearts,” but that it was not intended to stop at that. Throughout, He sets aside much in the Law that does not appeal to Him.

Even as regards the Prophets, the very expression He uses of them: “I am come to fulfil the Prophets,” shows that He was conscious of their shortcomings. He also speaks of the old Revelation, as a whole, as of a thing which has had its day: “The Law and the Prophets were until John, since that time

the Kingdom of God is preached^c." Christ is conscious that with Himself a new era has begun in the history of the world, that He is the bearer of a newer and larger message: "Many prophets have desired to see the things that ye see, and have not seen them; to hear the things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

Thus our Lord's attitude towards the Old Testament is one of perfect freedom and independence. He does not by any means regard it all as of equal value. He leaves aside, as of merely local and temporary worth, much which, from the standpoint of His contemporaries, was regarded as equally universal and abiding as what He retained.

(3) *Critical.*

It is when we come to the ritual law, that part of the Mosaic Code which deals with the cleansing of vessels, clean and unclean meats, and Sabbath-observance, that we reach a point where our Lord seems completely to break with the Law. Here He acted in a way which would profoundly shock the prejudices of strict Jews, the most pronounced letter-worshippers in the world. The liberties He took with the letter of their Old Testament cut across all their traditions and convictions, not of a lifetime, but of twenty generations.

If we forget, for the moment, that we are Christians,

^c What are we to make of the strong expression: "All that came before Me are thieves and robbers" (S. John x. 8)?

and put ourselves in the place of the scribes, we shall see that, consistently with their religious creed, they could not but brand Christ as a traitor to the Law of Moses, and almost a blasphemer. Let us try to examine dispassionately, from *their* point of view, with an unbiassed mind, a few counts in their indictment of our Lord.

He set Moses at naught, so they believed, and Moses, to a Jew, was almost what Christ is to us now. In the matter of divorce, Moses, in Deut. xxiv. 1, had given the Jews permission to put away their wives for very slight pretexts: "If she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her." (R.V.) Christ takes this Mosaic Law, and shows that it runs counter to God's original intention in the divine institution of marriage. The marriage-tie, says Christ, is indissoluble^d (S. Mark x. 2—12). Divorce is the outcome of hatred, and not of a forgiving heart. Christ deliberately adds: "For the hardness of your heart Moses wrote you this precept." Christ therefore supersedes this Mosaic Law.

Still worse in Jewish eyes would be our Lord's conduct with regard to the Sabbath. On the authority of God's Word, Sabbath-observance had behind it One far greater than Moses, the sanction of God's

^d S. Matthew's "except for the cause of fornication," is almost certainly the Evangelist's own addition, an editorial note, for it is omitted both by S. Mark x., and S. Luke xvi. 18. We shall see later, in dealing with S. Matthew's Gospel, why S. Matthew inserts this saving clause.

own hallowed example: "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work" (Gen. ii. 30). Again, on Mount Sinai, it was direct from God's own lips that Moses received the Commandment, "on it shalt thou do no manner of work." Surely here, if anywhere, we have inspired Bible-teaching which Christ will not question. He constantly does question it. On every single occasion when the commandment comes into direct conflict with acts of love and mercy, Christ consistently breaks the letter of it so as to keep it more truly in the spirit. It was over this very matter of Sabbath-observance that our Lord broke definitely with official Judaism (S. Mark iii. 6).

These are not two isolated instances. Christ takes the letter of the Mosaic Law on murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, retaliation, love to our neighbour, and, in each case, authoritatively restates it with His pronouncement: "It hath been said to them of old . . . but *I* say unto you."

But, in the cases hitherto examined, our Lord does not cancel the Law, or in any way abrogate it, as the Jews thought. On the contrary, in bringing out into prominent relief the underlying spirit, the broad principles underlying the letter of the old Law, He enhances tenfold the value and application of the precept He criticizes.

Far more radical is His method when He comes to deal with the purely ritual Laws of ceremonial respecting the cleansing of vessels, the washing of

hands by way of purification, the distinction between meats clean and unclean. He will have none of them. With a ruthless hand He sweeps aside these dead and deadening elements in the old creed.

In the classical passage on the subject, S. Mark vii. 2—23, the scribes and Pharisees ask our Lord how His disciples dare "eat bread with unwashen hands," in open violation of sacred tradition. Thus challenged, Christ not only flatly denies the authority of tradition, but exasperates the scribes and Pharisees by explicitly denouncing these very traditions as malignant things which annul the Word of God. He appeals to Scripture in proof of His assertion, and, by way of object-lesson, shows that they have made the Fifth Commandment a dead letter by this traditional casuistry and quibbling. He goes further still. Turning away in disgust from these leaders of Jewish religion, "He called the people unto Him, and said: Hearken unto Me every one of you" (S. Mark vii. 14), and by an apt illustration proves to them that the scribes and Pharisees are all wrong; that the only uncleanness which can soil a man is the moral pollution which comes from the heart (vii. 15). When the heart is pure, one meat is as clean as another.

On another occasion Christ even goes so far as to touch a leper, in defiance of the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. xiii., xiv.), and yet refuses to consider Himself unclean! Nothing can better illustrate our Lord's independence of the trammels of ritual Mosaic Law than this inci-

dent and His treatment of the Sabbath. But nothing could equally shock Pharisaic susceptibilities or general Jewish religious prejudices.

We may now briefly sum up our Lord's attitude to the Old Testament, "the Law and the Prophets."

(a) The Old Testament is to Christ the Revelation of God, but He sees it in broad principles, not in specific rules. In popular language, He emphatically affirms the permanent authority of the Old Testament, yet He does not leave it exactly as it stands. He "fulfils" it by bringing in a new law of the spirit, which cancels the law of the letter.

(b) He sets His seal to the lofty, progressive teaching of the Prophets, but puts the coping-stone to their work. He actualizes their incomplete revelation of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, and the Kingdom of God.

(c) The Law He restates, not by giving us a new set of commandments to be literally obeyed, but by opening up the principles of action which are to guide our heart and conscience, so that we may be a law unto ourselves (cf. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34).

(d) He brushes aside tradition as of no value whatever.

If this is the Spirit of Christ, have we not here the answer to our question: "Which of the two is nearer to our Lord's example and teaching—the Lambeth or the Papal Encyclical?" Rome says: The true

theology is unchanging ; Christ asserts, " New wine must be put in new bottles." Rome says : Any attempt to bring the Bible into line with the results of modern research is an unfaithful tampering with the sacred deposit of revealed truth. If this hypothesis is true, Christ stands self-condemned.

Is it not a fact that the moral we are to draw from our Lord's strictures on the Old Testament is this : Progress involves the putting aside of old bottles for new, the correction of false ideas and practices, the clearing away of spurious accretions, the defeat of those who counsel stagnation? Why was our Lord hounded to death? Because He tried to wean men from the cast-iron, rigid rules and dogmas with which official ecclesiasticism had overlaid and obscured the Word of God ; because He tried to make them break away from the bondage of traditional custom, interpretation, and formality, and bring them back to the freedom of the Spirit, with its broad living principles.

Men said and thought that, in so doing, Christ belittled the Bible. We now see that zealous as were the scribes and Pharisees for God's Word, Christ was a thousandfold more so than they, who were its official upholders and expounders. Our Lord's one contention was, not that the scribes were too strict in their observance of the Old Testament, but that they did not observe it enough. " Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." He demands a loyalty to the Law and

the Prophets far more exacting than theirs when He insists on an obedience, not to the bare letter, but to the spirit which underlies that letter. Rules are so easy to keep, principles so hard. Principles tax thought ; they involve personal responsibility, and we all hate the labour of thought and shrink from the burden of responsibility. We would rather have a clear-cut, definite rule. "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are *I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*"

Christ was a liberal in religion ; and He also sanctions and paves the way for reasonable and reverent Bible-criticism. He discriminates between what is temporary or local in God's Word, and what is intended for all times and all people. More than this, in His method of dealing with the Decalogue, He has definitely established certain broad principles which give the key to the true interpretation of the Bible, solvents which cause the perishing of all that is ready to pass away (Heb. viii. 13). Even as regards Bible-history,—on the rare occasions when Christ refers to it at all, e.g. Jonah, Moses at the Bush, David,—He only seizes on the moral or spiritual drift of the story, not on the matter-of-fact details.

Decry as we will the Higher Criticism, we are all in a sense Higher Critics. In the exercise of their private judgment,—and what is this but criticism ?—Christians every day of their lives set aside portions of the Old Testament as no longer speaking to them-

selves. Our Psalms, Isaiah, and Gospels are well thumbed, but what of Leviticus, Ecclesiastes, or Solomon's Song? Even the most conservative advocates of the creed that the Bible is equally inspired from cover to cover do not consistently act up to it. We do not even strictly keep the Ten Commandments. The Fourth Commandment orders us to keep holy the *seventh* day; we ignore it, and keep $\star$ the first day, or Sunday. We do not even copy our Lord's example. Christ was circumcised on the eighth day, according to the Mosaic Law. Long after our Lord's Ascension, S. James and all Palestinian Jewish Christians insisted that the Mosaic Law as regards circumcision, fasting, vows, things strangled, and so forth, was still in force and binding on themselves (Acts xv.). We set it aside altogether. Why? Christ never abrogated it in so many words. S. Paul did so, not our Lord.

What is all this but tacit Higher Criticism? One of our Bishops truly writes: "The real question is not whether Bible criticism is to be allowed or not, for all admit this and personally act on it. The question is whether criticism is to follow an orderly and scientific method, or to follow the vagaries of individual prejudice or caprice" (Bishop of Ripon).

CHAPTER III.

NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM—OLD STYLE AND NEW.

IF our Lord, by His own example, sanctions Bible criticism, why is it in such bad odour, and regarded with such suspicion nowadays? Why do so many Christians speak of it as the Bible's deadliest foe, though posing as its friend?

Popular imagination pictures the Higher Critic as one who, applying human methods to the Bible, resolves both the Old Testament and the Gospel-story itself into a tissue of legends, and does not spare even Christ. Men complain that in the critic's hands, Jesus becomes a mere man: another great personality like Socrates, but only the natural flower of Hebrew heart-development, even as the Greek sage is the perfect blossom of Hellenistic brain-evolution; while the Inspiration of S. John is on a level with the inspiration of Shakespeare, and miracles are a hallucination. In short, the common opinion of the Higher Criticism endorses a highly-educated modern writer's definition of it as "an astounding license of reckless theorizing, forced interpretations, contempt of evidence, and systematic disregard of common-sense, posing under the name of scholarship."

Why is it in such bad repute? The answer is not far to seek. The blame lies at the door of the Higher Critics themselves. The sins of the Tübingen school in its early days, and of some of its disciples now, have come home to roost.

We have seen that our Lord's Bible-criticism was essentially constructive, not destructive; positive, not negative. He had a sense of continuity and of values. To Him the old was "very good." For men's sakes, and for its own intrinsic worth, He spared it all He could. He never parleyed with error, tampered with principle, nor deviated one inch from the straight path marked out for Him; but neither did He reject the old simply because it was old, or formulate new teaching just to break with the past. He came, not to destroy, but to fulfil.

Therefore He helped men, because He did not lose their confidence. They felt that He was a genuine Hebrew Prophet standing on the very ground which their fathers had occupied, and uttering old familiar truths, though in a new way. Even when He attacked existing ideas, practices, and institutions, the heart of the people told them that His very criticisms and rebukes were inspired by His Love of the Law and the Prophets, dear to Him as to themselves. His *new* was their *old*, only transfigured and freed from the men-invented traditions and glosses which were corrupting and making it void.

Some Bible critics, even now, do the very reverse. They are primarily destructive, not constructive;

negative, not positive. They seem to aim at cutting themselves loose from all the creeds of the past, to detect flaws in the old because it is old, to deny it any value. There is all the difference in the world between this hypercritical attitude and the reasonable criticism which is so helpful to mankind.

Helpfulness to mankind has nothing to do with the matter, it will be urged ; as seekers after Truth, critics must be lured neither to the right hand nor to the left by any will-o'-the-wisp of sentiment, tradition, or authority. Neither likes nor dislikes—not even the highest and purest of moral instincts and aspirations—must divert them from their path. Whether they are understood or misunderstood, their duty is the same. They must speak as facts dictate.

True, but a man may be a thoroughgoing critic without supposing that criticism is more scientific when it disproves than when it proves. There is an uncritical despotism of criticism, just as there is an irreligious despotism of religion. The bigots of criticism are men not naturally critical, just as the bigots of religion are men not naturally religious.

It is precisely this unscientific criticism, which considers its work incomplete till it has disproved the trustworthiness of the Gospels or reduced the Person of Christ to the natural level of humanity, that is responsible for the *odium criticum*^a. Hence

^a Every critic must say what he thinks, if he is honest. In the long run, even the most outrageously unsettling statements, (like heresies,) do good. They stimulate thought and put men on their mettle. This

it is that so many people define the aim and mission of criticism as a perverse resolve to rend and tear to pieces all that good men hold most dear and sacred. Hence it is, too, that men view it as a purely destructive force, which saps men's beliefs and revels in nothing so much as to shock and startle pious souls.

There is no reason whatever why the critic should not subject the New Testament to the most fierce searchlight. If it cannot stand the test and establish its claims, when the severest scientific and historical methods are applied to it, we have no right to ask rational men to accept it as of binding authority. But if criticism is without fear or favour, let it also be without prejudice. Liberty need not degenerate into license. We must not mince matters, but we need not be wrong-headed.

Happily for us, this unfortunate spirit of carping at the Gospels and Christ is rarer nowadays, and rather represents the state of things of forty or sixty years ago. It is to that period that we must go back if we would trace the popular prejudice against the Higher Criticism to its true source. Even after sixty years, Bible-critics are still suffering for the sins of the founders of the Higher Criticism, the exaggerations of scholars of the type of Baur and Strauss of

is why we learn so much more from stimulative German critics than from orthodox English scholars. Germans are so independent and brutally outspoken. Even while often disagreeing with them, English scholars owe a heavy debt to German critics, especially to that admirable genius, Harnack, who has all the German virtues, some of ours, and a great deal more of his own.

the famous infamous early Tübingen School. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

Of this School it is impossible to speak impartially and dispassionately nowadays, so rudely did its immature and ultra-radical findings shock Christianity. Yet, we must try to describe it, if the reader is to compare the old and the new style of criticism for himself.

Broadly stated, the old Tübingen School starts from a position clearly laid down by Strauss. Its main axiom is that miracles, or unheard of interruptions of Nature's Laws, are impossible. Therefore any narrative (e.g. the Gospels) which seriously records such miracles as sober facts is thereby at once stamped as legendary and unhistorical. Some of the more cautious Tübingen writers put the case a little more mildly. They maintain that the attitude of the inspired writers towards the miraculous does not rob their narrative of all historical value, but hampers their record with such extreme improbability, and makes it so untrustworthy, that the positive evidence in favour of the writer's truthfulness and reliability would require to be much stronger to carry conviction than actually is the case with our Evangelists.—But this looks like a distinction without a difference.

They therefore conclude that our Gospels are not the record of genuine eye-witnesses, that is to say, our Gospels are of a far later origin than is commonly supposed, unhistorical, a mere collection of

myths, legends, and hearsay. Or, as Strauss himself expressed it: "We enter the Gospel-history by the splendid portal of myth, and leave it by the weary paths of a natural explanation."

The Tübingen view is that the whole of the New Testament was written for purely party purposes; i.e. our New Testament is simply the monument of a long theological struggle between the Gospel-theology of Paul and the Gospel-theology of James and the older Apostles,—the story of a deadly feud which long split early Christianity into two rival camps.

We do know as a fact (Acts xv.; 1 Cor. i. 12; Gal. ii. 11, 12) that the older Apostles did *not* see eye to eye with S. Paul in many matters connected with the Mosaic Law. They continued to observe it. He would have none of it for himself or his converts. Clearly, party-feeling ran high on this point, for the First General Council of Jerusalem was expressly summoned to effect a compromise between the two sides. This it effectually did, mainly through the mediation of S. Peter. Mutual concessions were made on both sides. S. Paul and his converts were exempted from the bondage of the Mosaic yoke, with slight reservations. The Apostles gave each other the right hand of fellowship, and parted in perfect harmony (Acts xv.).

On the strength of 1 Cor. i. 12, and especially Gal. ii. 11, 12, the Tübingen School denies that any such complete reconciliation was ever achieved. They see in S. Paul's Epistles throughout, on the one hand,

and in such New Testament books as S. James, the Apocalypse, and S. Matthew on the other, clear traces of this antagonism at its sharpest. In their opinion, S. Paul, and none other, is the person at whom S. James is aiming one of the bitterest terms of Hebrew execration when he exclaims: "But art thou willing to recognize, O empty person, that faith without works is dead?" And, according to their interpretation, the writer of the Apocalypse hurled forth yet fiercer anathemas, describing Paul as "a false Apostle," a "Balaam," a "Jezebel," and so forth. While S. Paul retorts by ridiculing "the beggarly elements of the law," and those "who fancied themselves to be somewhat and pillars of the Church" (cf. Gal. ii., and 2 Cor. x.).

Thus the various books of the New Testament would be the literary work of theological pamphleteers: counterblasts written by either side for the express purpose of strengthening its own position and shattering the opposite party. This bitter hostility, say they, gradually mellowed with time, and in the "Gospel of S. John" we have a very late second-century production, which shows that at last the two opposing Christian factions have arrived at a compromise and are dwelling more or less in harmony, though even this late writer speaks somewhat slightly of "your law," and "their law."

The conclusions and verdict of the Tubingen School may be thus summed up: The New Testament pours a flood of light on the internal struggles of the

Christian Church during the second century. Here it gives us valuable information. As a historical record of the life and teaching of Christ it is worthless. The New Testament is nothing but a set of literary fictions of very late date.

The theory of the older Tübingen School finds few if any supporters nowadays. It is an exploded hypothesis which has been "overthrown by men almost as 'free' as themselves from orthodox prepossessions."

Yet we owe much to the Tübingen School, though it brought the Higher Criticism into very bad repute. They were the first to break away from traditional methods and the tyranny of scholastic ecclesiastical authority, the first to bring the new principle of scientific historical investigation to bear on the Bible. The leaders of this school were men of immense ability, independence, and scholarship; intellectual giants, and yet dwarfs. This paradox is a truism of all founders of any great movement. As the "fathers of criticism" their influence is epoch-making, but as critical authorities their value is very small. They neither kept close to their actual texts nor hesitated to generalize without adequate facts. In their determination to prove a pet theory, they allowed zeal to outrun discretion, and broke every canon of scientific criticism. They built a castle on a foundation of sand. It is one of the episodes in the history of the Higher Criticism which its opponents have never allowed us to forget. Even now, Bible-critics have

to run the gauntlet of the odium and discredit which such immature utterances and dogmatic arrogance deservedly bring in their train.

It was in 1835 that Strauss published his *Leben Jesu*. Baur followed it up exactly ten years later with his *Paulus*. The mythical theory was remorselessly applied to the whole Gospel-story. Criticism was then in its infancy, and laboured under all the defects of its childhood stage. Critics jumped at conclusions. They discovered one slight clue in their hypothesis of a feud between the older Apostles and Paul, and immediately proclaimed their "find" to the world as if they carried the key to the Gospel-problem in their pocket.

But we can make some allowance for them. Their theory is only one of those remarkable exaggerations of a partial truth in which the nineteenth century was so prolific. Every age which ushers in great discoveries and sweeping changes is liable to that kind of exaggeration. New ideas and discoveries (e.g. evolution, radium, telepathy, the new theology) first stagger then captivate men's minds, and assume magic powers for a time. In due season men see these things in proper perspective, and the next generation smiles at the former omnipotence of such catchwords.

So it was with the "almighty discovery" of the Tübingen School. They exaggerated everything, exalted a thin hypothesis into a solid law, emphasized every point which made for their view, slurred over or ignored inconsistent facts which traversed it.

These blots are visible on their every page. They start with a presupposition: Christ worked no miracles. From this dogmatic assertion, which is nothing but a plausible guess, they immediately jump to their verdict, without calling any evidence: The Gospel-writers are not contemporary eye-witnesses, and their record is a myth. They have to account somehow for the existence of S. Matthew, S. Mark, S. Luke, and S. John. Their fertile imagination is equal to the occasion: The Gospels are second-century writings composed to buttress up the pet theological views of two rival schools, the Judaizing and Pauline Christians. But they find themselves confronted with the awkward fact that, before that date, our Gospels are quoted by early ecclesiastical writers. This difficulty is easily surmounted: These ecclesiastical documents are either forgeries or wrongly dated.

Since 1835, Biblical scholars have undergone a long training in a stern school. There they have been taught to unlearn much and to learn still more. For two generations a sound drilling in modern scientific methods has had a very salutary effect. They now know that guess-work will not do, and that nothing short of verified evidence based on solid facts will do. The critic has also learnt the wisdom of not being too positive, and, that hardest of lessons, the virtue of saying candidly at times: "I don't know."

"Comprehensiveness of knowledge, an open mind, and a well balanced judgment" (Sanday), these are

the tools of the critic's trade. For him "no sweat, no sweet." Only by many years of patient toil and self-denying study can he collect his verified facts and cultivate the frame of mind essential to one who sits in the seat of judgment.

We may sum up the canons of the modern scientific Higher Criticism in a few words :

(a) Criticism goes upon questions of fact.

(b) Criticism must follow fearlessly wherever facts lead ^b.

(c) Criticism must be free from presuppositions.

(d) Criticism remembers the limitations of human knowledge ^c.

We have just spoken of the years of patient toil entailed in the accumulation of verified evidence before any positive results can be obtained. By way of illustration, let us rapidly glance at a few of the topics with which the critic of S. John's Gospel should be familiar.

(1) *History*. Christ was born in Palestine, a Jewish province under Roman rule. To judge Christ and Jews alike aright, we must reconstruct the whole contemporary background. It is not enough for us to have a knowledge of previous Jewish history and

^b "To dictate to knowledge the result at which it is to arrive is to make knowledge impossible" (Harnack).

^c "The conclusions of criticism attain to nothing more than a greater or less probability. But the probability may be such as to satisfy the most exacting mind" (Davidson).

of the Roman system of government. We must be acquainted with the manners and customs, the social conditions, the language and institutions^d, the mental and moral atmosphere of Palestine in our Lord's day. Thus only can our Western minds, 1900 years after the events, see Christ and His Work in their original Eastern setting, as they appeared to the actual spectators. We must see through Jewish eyes, and hear through Jewish ears. We must be one of the disciples who daily walked with Christ, one of the scribes and Pharisees who misunderstood Him, one of the crowd who shouted "Hosannah" on Palm Sunday, and "Crucify Him" on Good Friday, one of the Romans who tried Him and carried out His sentence.

Where is the critic to obtain all this information? It is not for us to say; it is for him to provide, or he cannot be our intelligent guide.

(2) *Geography*. It is a Syrian landscape that forms the scene of the Gospel-story. At every turn we are confronted by the hills and Lake of Galilee, the rocky heights of Judæa, the rich and broad valleys of Samaria, and we must be familiar with the topography of Palestine if we are to frame a true picture of our Lord's Ministry and journeys.

More than this. Just as we have seen that Schmiedel fancies he detects mistakes in John's

^d e.g. Schmiedel accuses the writer of St. John's Gospel of ignorance of the condition of things in our Lord's day, because the Evangelist states that "Caiaphas was high-priest that year." A contemporary, he maintains, would have known the office was held for life.

history, of which no contemporary could be guilty, so it is with John's geography. The mention of two Bethanys in the Fourth Gospel is constantly cited against its Johannine authorship, on the plea that a Palestinian Jew would have known there was only one. Is John right here or his critics? Only a close acquaintance with the geography of the Holy Land can settle such points.

Physical geography is not enough. We must know the political geography so as to differentiate the pure Jews of Judæa from the semi-Greek population of portions of Galilee, the hybrid race of Samaria, and the half-heathen, half-Jewish settlements East of Jordan.

(3) *Literature and philosophy.* The Jews were steeped to the lips in Old Testament literature,—they spoke and even thought in its words; so must the critic if he is not to miss many an Old Testament reference in the Gospels.

Eschatology—or the group of ideas connected with Messiah's Coming in judgment,—plays a most prominent part in the Gospels. If the critic is not familiar with the large body of Apocalyptic literature dealing with the "Day of the Lord" and the "Coming of Messiah," he will be a blind leader of the blind, for the whole of our Lord's Eschatology is expressed in current Apocalyptic language.

The student of S. John's Gospel must go further than this. This Gospel begins: "In the beginning was the Word." This expression, "The Word,"

“Logos,” is intimately connected with the philosophy of the Jew-philosopher Philo: so are many other terms in the Fourth Gospel. Did the Evangelist borrow these ideas from Philo, or from the Hebrew Bible? One of the main problems of the Fourth Gospel hangs on this point.

Again, the whole question of the date and authorship of our Gospels often hinges largely on the external evidence of such early ecclesiastical writers as the Apostolic Fathers and their successors, e.g. Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, together with such documents as Tatian’s “Harmony of the Gospels” and the Muratorian Fragment. This needs a careful study of the Patristic theology of at least three centuries after Christ.

(4) *Textual criticism.* S. John viii. 3—12 (“The woman taken in adultery”) is alleged and now acknowledged to be an interpolation (cf. S. John v. 4 and S. Mark xvi. 9—20). A glance at the margin of the Revised Version will also show that many of the readings of the text are doubtful. These interpolations and variants present difficulties which can only be explained by a scholar fully cognizant of the manner in which the New Testament Text has been handed down to us.

(5) *Literary style.* The writer of the Apocalypse is supposed to be the Apostle John, so is the author of the Fourth Gospel. If so, there should be literary affinity between the two works. Only an expert in style and peculiarities of phraseology can establish

this affinity. Harnack, in his "Luke the Physician," convincingly proves what an essential qualification this is in a critic.

This rough outline-sketch is necessarily incomplete, and gives but a faint idea of the critical equipment of a thoroughgoing modern Bible-scholar. Practically every branch of knowledge has to be put under contribution. Psychology, in particular, is playing a most important part in modern *Lives* of Christ. Though it is a most powerful weapon, it is also one of the most dangerous. In our desire to connect Christ's actions with the motives that prompted them, we may read much into His Consciousness which is not there.

Archæology has also poured much light upon our Gospel pages.

As may readily be imagined, no one man is capable of this encyclopædic knowledge. Special branches of Gospel-study have to be left in the hands of experts in each department; thus alone can accuracy and depth be secured. The critic's chief duty is loyally to accept, in each branch of study, the specialists' matured conclusions *where they agree*.

It is seriously urged in many quarters, and not unreasonably, that this tendency to extreme specialization is the weak point of all scientific work at the present day, and for two reasons. It has a narrowing effect, and is responsible for much hair-splitting. More than this. All Higher Critics,—the greatest

included,—are thus compelled to borrow a great deal of their evidence from brother-specialists, and with what result? Is it not possible that under the cover of a number of authorities (who have borrowed from one and the same source on trust), and especially under the sanction of the great names of master-minds (who have had to take a lesser specialist's word), we may sometimes accept statements as authoritative which are only loans from sources not absolutely reliable?

Happily for us, the Higher Critics' work has now been, for many a year, jealously and searchingly scrutinized by friend and foe alike. Criticism itself, like science, is also the first to admit and correct its own mistakes.

We have already acknowledged that criticism is neither final nor infallible, but even conservative theologians are beginning to recognize its scholarly completeness and absolute fairness. They still eye the Higher Criticism with suspicion, but the old outcry against it is fast dying away.

PART II.

GOSPEL SIDE-LIGHTS.

- (1) Two ways of writing a Life of Christ. (Chap. IV.)
- (2) Are our Gospels faithful records? (Chap. V.)
- (3) Oral Tradition, or the Gospel-material. (Chap. VI.)
- (4) The rise of written gospels. (Chap. VII.)
- (5) When were our Gospels canonized? (Chap. VIII.)
- (6) The Text of our New Testament. (Chap. IX.)
- (7) Apocalyptic Literature. (Chap. X.)

CHAPTER IV.

TWO WAYS OF WRITING CHRIST'S LIFE.

DR. SANDAY says: "We can read the Life of Christ either by working from within outwards, or from without inwards." And we can at once see what he means. There are two ways of approaching Christ's Life. One method is to explain it in terms of His Consciousness, to start from within, to interpret His actions by the light of the motives which gave birth to them. The other method is the reverse of this. It begins with the external facts of Christ's Life, steepes itself in them, and makes Christ's deeds and words themselves testify to the Spirit that was in Him, the superhuman Personality of our Lord.

To take a concrete illustration, S. John and S. Mark may, in a way, be taken as types of the two methods. S. John, in his Life of Christ, works from within outwards. He explains everything that Christ *does* and *says* in terms of what He *is*. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made Flesh," "I and the Father are One,"—here, for John, is the key which fits into all the wards of the lock, the principle which harmonizes all the facts of the Life.

S. Mark, on the other hand, starts from the external facts of Christ's Life, and works from without inwards. He places before us a Christ "going about doing

good," casting out evil spirits, healing all manner of diseases, mighty in word and deed ; a Christ Who lets His heart go out to the lepers and outcasts. He marshals his facts in such a way that, step by step, we are led up to his own conception of Jesus as " The strong Son of God, Immortal Love."

We can adopt either course, and each has its advantages. There is a great deal to be said in favour of the " S. John method," if we may be allowed the expression for the moment. It starts from the very centre, the soul of things, and this is precisely what all history wants to get at. The most matter-of-fact historian will admit that a great life or a great complex movement cannot be adequately rendered by a simple recapitulation of facts and dates. A great personality, a great life, like that of Napoleon, is an organic whole, and must be reconstructed as such. The isolated events must be combined, linked together by means of some principle which will harmonize them. We must seek the motive behind the actions which quickens them into life, the thread which gives them unity.

This is *one* reason why so many prefer the Fourth Gospel to the other three. It does not, like them, narrate events with little other thought than that of the mere chronicler. John puts into our hands from the outset the clue to the mystery of Christ's Life. Before, it was an enigma, now it is so clear. With that key in our hand we go back to the other Gospels, and all their closed doors at once open to us.

More than this, even the most matter-of-fact biographer cannot dispense with the "S. John method" altogether, and yet present us a coherent picture of the life he is sketching. Consciously or unconsciously, when we narrate events, we all reconstruct the scene, and colour it with an interpretation of our own which oozes out through our string of facts. Even S. Mark had his own private impression of Jesus, and, as we have seen, he so marshals his facts that he forcibly conveys that impression to our own minds.

But the S. John, or psychological method, has one very great disadvantage. It is perfectly true that the historian of a reflective or philosophical mind seems to give us a far truer and more logical estimate of a great personality than the mere chronicler, but it is a view of it as seen through the narrator's own spectacles. He may be, and probably is, reading a great deal into his picture which is not in the original at all. A Cæsar, Napoleon, or Gladstone is approached by different biographers. Each frames his own psychological analysis of the man's character,—analyses often diametrically opposed and never quite correct,—and each historian ends by making all the facts of the life tally with his own conception of the personality he is delineating.

Herein lies the great danger and drawback of the psychological method. True, it is the one ideal method of writing history. It is thus God writes it. But we are not gifted with His omniscience.

In dealing with the Life of our Lord, there is another

great risk involved in this method. Psychology lays bare motives in all their nakedness. It matters not whose motives they may be. The avowed object of the psychological critic, his *raison d'être*, is to analyse dispassionately everything he examines. This he must do, even when it jars on his own or others' feelings. Be his subject of examination our Lord Himself, it is his bounden duty to do his work with as much independence and freedom as if he were dealing with an ordinary man. And any such callous dissection of Jesus Christ must needs be unduly offensive to Christian feelings, and the irreverence of it is repellent^a.

These are some of the reasons why the modern biographer, especially in a Life of Christ, discards the psychological method, as far as possible, and adopts the safer course of "working from without inwards." Instead of starting from the centre, Christ's Personality, he starts from the circumference, the mass of external data that surround Him. This is his base of operations, and from it he makes a steady, disciplined advance upon the centre from all sides, step by step, making absolutely sure of his ground as he proceeds.

^a This may be too strongly worded. S. John shows how reverently it can be done. The pulpit does it every Sunday, and, in its stupidity if not in wilful irreverence, often sins worse than the most radical German. In a sense, the thing has to be done if we are to have any theology at all. Psychology has in every way deepened our idea of Christ's Personality. But "*sit modus in rebus: sunt certi denique fines.*"

As every step is based upon previous steps, verified evidence is a matter of vital importance. His whole conclusion hangs upon facts, and his chain of evidence is no stronger than its weakest links. Hence, when a modern scientific historian sets himself to reconstruct a particular life or movement, his first step is to collate all the available evidence in any way bearing on his subject, carefully sifting it so as to retain none but verified facts. His preoccupation about literary form is quite secondary ; moral reflexion he avoids. But he is bound to quicken into life the huge army of dry bones, the vast array of facts he has collated. He must discover and supply some connecting thread which will link together his disconnected mass of facts into a logical and organic whole. This he can only do by steeping himself in the spirit of the events he is recording, making them tell their own life-story, yet carefully rejecting all inferences which the facts themselves do not logically suggest. Imaginary conjecture must be reduced to a negligible quantity.

To return to the New Testament. Here we have four Evangelists writing a biography of Christ. S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke profess to give us a matter-of-fact statement of the Man and His Work. How far do their historical accounts of the Life satisfy our modern standard of history ?

We must bear in mind that our present exacting conception of history is the natural outcome of a

scientific age. The Evangelists wrote in other times, when other conditions prevailed. They lived in an unscientific atmosphere. History, in their day, was viewed as an art, a species of portrait-painting with grand outline and rich tints. Artistic history, in the hands of intellectual geniuses, such as the Greek Thucydides or the Roman Tacitus, allowed of something like final perfection. But emotional Jews, living in a land where secular literature was despised, could never approach the accuracy of a Thucydides or a Tacitus. Truth of idea appealed to them far more than truth of fact. And, generally speaking, in olden days absolute fidelity to fact in details, laborious research, and careful sifting of evidence were unknown. These appear to be very serious defects in the eyes of a generation like ours, which has brought historical evidence to a pitch of accuracy and exactness nearly as stringent as that which regulates the depositions in a court of justice.

But there is another side to the picture, and the verdict is not in our favour on all counts. We readily admit that ancient historians laboured under many disadvantages which render their work inferior to ours. They had not our vast sources of information at their disposal. Written records were scarce, and unsafe oral tradition constantly had to supply their place. They were also careless of research, and did not always avail themselves of all the knowledge accessible even in their day.

But they had one great redeeming virtue which

modern historians often lack. They were men of large sympathies, deeply interested in their subject and fully in touch with it, writing, not as pedants, but with a keen and true appreciation of life; they also wrote for readers who were men of the world and not book-worms. Sympathy and feeling are sometimes valuable assets. There are many truths which the heart at once feels and detects, though they are too subtle to appeal to the intellect, and this is why poetry is so often truer and deeper than philosophy. As Prof. Burkitt truly remarks: "A true impression of a person is on the whole and for most people better conveyed by a friend than by an observer wholly dispassionate." Personally, if we had the option of one of two eye-witnesses of our Lord's Ministry, either the illiterate but sympathetic Mark, or the learned but dispassionate Harnack, we should greatly prefer Mark in the interests of truthfulness of impression.

The modern craze for scientific completeness and minute elaboration of detail can be carried too far and defeat its own ends, burying the truth under a mass of erudition. The citation of chapter and verse for every statement, important as it is, is apt to become a little oppressive, and tends to obscure the main issue. More than erudition, more than an exhaustive knowledge of authorities, more than intellectual genius, more than dispassionate observation is needed to give true insight into character, or to

enable a writer to realize and paint a great historic scene.

Ancient historians were strong where we are weak, weak where we are strong. On the whole, the balance decidedly dips in our favour, but not to the extent we sometimes fancy. Wrong in matters of detail old historians frequently are, apt to be careless and rather credulous, but their impressionist portraits are often better than our tame, if correct, photographs. They idealize, it may be, but they catch the true expression, instinctively hit off the real character, and their total impression is right.

It is well to remember this when we come to examine critically the Evangelists' portraits of our Lord, for if they possess many virtues they are by no means without flaw.

We want to reconstruct the actual historical Portrait of the Christ for ourselves, to go "back to Christ." For this, we have little to go upon beyond what is given us in the Gospels. Men are asking nowadays: "Is that Gospel-Portrait historically true?" To settle this point, it is not enough to hear the evidence of our Gospel witnesses, what they volunteer to give us, we must learn to cross-examine our witnesses.

Some of our readers may exclaim: "But, surely, you are forgetting that 'The Word of God came not from man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' therefore the Gospel-story is true to the very letter."

Yet the same Bible reminds us that "we have this treasure in *earthen* vessels." The inspired writers are not God, not even angels, only men, and imperfect men. We have seen that the inspired writers themselves are by no means all on the same level. Even in the Bible, inspiration, and the guidance of God, and the leading of the Holy Spirit are matters of degree. The Holy Spirit is behind the Scripture record, all the while prompting, guiding, inspiring the hearts and brains of these "holy men," but they are human hearts and human brains. The mere fact of Inspiration did not enable the writer of Genesis to give a scientific account of the Creation, nor an Ecclesiastes or the author of Esther to rise above a very moderate spiritual level. In the Bible, the Word of God comes to us through some thirty different "earthen vessels," and in each case the message from God reaches us, not only tinged and coloured by the limitations, the knowledge or ignorance of the day and generation which gave it birth, but even more by the individuality of the person who delivers it.

Therefore, with the human element so pronounced in the Bible, it does not follow that the authors of its various books are infallible, incapable of error, because they are inspired. Men will still ask, and rightly ask : "Is the Gospel-Portrait of Christ historically true?"

On one point, all critics are agreed. In the Jesus of the Gospels we have not a creation of the Evangelists' imagination, but a historical Figure as real as Julius Cæsar or Wellington. It is the Portrait of

One Who is at once the rebuke and the inspiration of every age, a moral Ideal which realizes once and for all the highest aspirations of all mankind, so that there is no higher goodness than that which we see in Him. It is a picture of such inexpressible moral beauty that even critics who are avowed anti-supernaturalists can only evade calling Him God by attributing to the Man Jesus qualities so sublime as really to embrace all that we understand by God. To imagine that four ordinary men, such as we know the Evangelists to be, could ever have invented such a Portrait is to ask us to believe in a miracle as great as the Incarnation itself.

One like unto the Son of Man depicted in the Gospels undoubtedly walked upon this earth 1900 years ago. Even apart from the Gospels, the mere existence of the Christian Church would convincingly prove this historical fact.

But this is not what we mean by the question : " Is the Gospel-Portrait true ? " The question at issue is rather of this nature. Our Gospels were certainly not written till thirty years, and, in one instance, not till sixty years after the events they narrate. Now we know how easily stories change and grow, when they are not embodied in written records but transmitted from mouth to mouth. Oral tradition is all well and good for contemporary events, but tradition, after a few decades, is very unsafe and apt to become both inventive and forgetful. The human memory is proverbially treacherous, and our Gospel-records are full

of inconsistencies which clearly prove that Apostolic memories were not free from this defect. We cannot possibly expect that a S. Mark after thirty years, still more a "S. John"^b after sixty years, would reproduce the past with the exactness of despatches written at the time. As the Dean of Westminster truly remarks, this would be to postulate a miraculous interference with the ordinary laws governing human memories, a miracle which no sound theory of Inspiration warrants.

The question therefore naturally arises: May not the Tübingen School, after all, be nearer the truth than we think, when it hints that it was in this half-light of tradition that the Gospel-legends and myths, the miracles and infancy-stories of our Lord were born of the creative fancy of man? when it suggests that the difficulty of separating fact from fiction in this borderland of mingled fable and reality amounts nowadays to practical impossibility?

This is not a discovery or a difficulty of to-day. Origen long ago emphasized the fact that our Gospels often give inconsistent and even contradictory accounts of the self-same facts in a way which it is impossible either to ignore or explain away. He even adds: "The Gospels contain many things which are said to have happened, but which did not happen literally." It is admitted nowadays almost on all hands that in S. John we must not look for history in the strict

^b We use this expression for brevity. It must not be taken to imply necessarily that S. John was the author of the Fourth Gospel. So with S. Matthew.

sense of the word. Even such a stalwart conservative scholar as the Dean of Westminster says of the Fourth Gospel, "it is a theological interpretation; not bare narrative." The same inconsistencies and contradictions confront us in the purely historical Gospels. Take the two versions of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount in S. Matthew and S. Luke respectively. Not only is S. Matthew's Sermon three times as long as S. Luke's, but they do not tally even in their account of its subject-matter. S. Luke tells us that much of what S. Matthew inserts in that discourse was spoken by our Lord on quite different occasions.

This may be enough to show that there is good reason for asking "Is the Gospel-Portrait historically true?" The human element is palpably present even in the Gospels. They are not unanimous but often contradict one another; they are written by men fallible as ourselves, and yet in their very weakness lies their strength.

S. Paul expressly tells us in 1 Cor. i. 21—23 that God in His wisdom elects to reach us through men, with all their imperfections. The Light of Heaven, like the light of day, *can* only reach us through earthly media. The sunlight would blind us with its brightness if it did not pass through our earthly atmosphere with its layers of vapour visible and invisible. Even so, to suit our finite capacities, the Light of Heaven must come to us through human subjectivities, an Isaiah, a psalmist, and a S. Paul, or our eyes would not be able to bear its dazzling splendour. By passing through so many human atmospheres, the Gospel

has been moulded to suit the variety of human minds, and precisely as the sunlight which has passed through earthly mists is beneficent because it is the sunlight still, so the light that reaches us through the Evangelists' minds can never of itself lead us astray, for it is the Light from Heaven still.

Each of the four Evangelists is painting his Portrait of the Christ from a different standpoint. Christ is far too great for any one of the four to attempt to give us more than a partial view of Him. As well might an artist try to place the Alps on his canvas. Even when we supplement the one by the other, we are still very far from seeing the Christ as He really is. Each Evangelist gives us the total impression of his Lord which the Personality of the Christ made upon him. S. Matthew sees the Messiah of Prophecy ; S. Mark, the strong loving Son of God ; S. Luke, the universal Saviour ; S. John, the Eternal Word. Each picture shows aright one side of Christ's manifold character. The same Spirit is speaking through them all, and though the voices are four, the utterance is really one. In each case, they are humanly fallible, yet divinely inspired. It is still the Light of Heaven that comes to us, but it has passed through four different atmospheres, and they have coloured its rays. But this is not all loss, their weakness is our strength.

“ Only the prism's obstruction shows aright
The secret of a sunbeam, breaks its light
Into the jewelled bow from blankest white ;
So may a glory from defect arise.” (Browning.)

Vox quidem dissona, sed una religio. The voices differ, because, if there is in each Evangelist a divine element, there is also a human factor. Their Portrait of the same Figure is not precisely identical, because it is painted by four different artists and their perspective, their materials, their individuality, their skill, their values differ.

The same Holy Spirit which inspired them is within us now (for, in a sense, we are all inspired), and bears witness in our own hearts that their testimony is true. One Portrait appeals to one set of minds, another to another, and we may, with all reverence, believe that God intended this. But still the question insists on being heard, "Which is the truer picture?"

This question we cannot answer till we have satisfied ourselves, (and others, if possible,) on such important points as these respecting the authors of S. Matthew, S. Mark, S. Luke, and S. John:—Are they Apostles, or, at any rate, immediate disciples of our Lord? Do we know anything of their individuality? What material had they by them as their foundation in the composition of their Gospels? From what sources did they derive this information? Were they eye-witnesses, or did they gather their facts at second-hand? If they had to depend on sources outside themselves for their information, did they obtain their knowledge of Christ's Life from the Apostles, from existing documents, or from oral tradition? How are we to account for their variations? Have we in our present Text

the actual words and complete writings of the Evangelists? Does contemporary history or early ecclesiastical literature throw any light on these points?

These preliminary questions must be considered before we are in a position to assert the historical accuracy of our Gospel-records with their Life of Christ. Investigations of this nature involve dry details, and details are tedious and tiresome. But the thing has to be done; and, surely, it is well worth while, for our subject—the reconstruction of the historical Portrait of Jesus—is one of vital importance in itself and of absorbing interest to mankind.

CHAPTER V.

ARE OUR GOSPELS FAITHFUL RECORDS?

BEFORE we attack the problems suggested at the end of the preceding chapter, some reference should be made to three sweeping objections often urged against the historical trustworthiness of our Gospels.

It has been pointed out that our Gospels are nothing but :—

- (a) condensed summaries,
- (b) imperfect translations,
- (c) late records.

(a) *Our Gospels are summaries.* We should only betray a pitiful ignorance were we to question this statement. S. John, writing last of all, openly admits that our Gospels are but a very abridged report of our Lord's Teaching and Ministry (S. John xxi. 25 ; xx. 30). If it were necessary to prove this obvious fact, we might place side by side S. Matth. v.—vii. and S. Luke vi.—the two Gospel-versions of the Sermon on the Mount. S. Matthew gives us the whole Sermon in 109 verses, S. Luke in 29. On the face of it, S. Luke's report is much more condensed than S. Matthew's, even if we omit from S. Matthew's version passages which are admittedly

foreign to it. But even S. Matthew's account of the Sermon is a highly-condensed summary. We know from the Gospels themselves that on such important occasions our Lord was in the habit of speaking for hours together, sometimes from morning to evening, and, on one occasion, for three days at a time (S. Mark viii. 2 ; vi. 35 ; iv. 35). It is a well-known Oriental trait to make time a very secondary consideration under such circumstances. But even the longer version of the Sermon as given in S. Matthew would not have taken much more than twenty minutes to deliver, and twenty-minute sermons were not the rule in those days. Evidently we have little more than the bare headings of the actual Sermon.

So it is with the Gospel-story taken as a whole. Prof. Burkitt well remarks :—"On the very shortest estimate, the length of Christ's Ministry must have extended to about 400 days, and I doubt if our Gospels contain stories from 40 separate days. And all the recorded sayings of our Lord, how long would they take to pronounce? With due gravity and emphasis, they might take six hours ; hardly, perhaps, so much."

Now many persons find this summarizing process on the part of our Evangelists a terrible stumbling-block. They complain that it robs us of the requisite information for writing a complete biography of our Lord according to modern historical requirements.

But is this objection really as serious as it seems? The real question is not whether we have as much

as we should like, but whether, as S. John xx. 30, 31 implies, we have as much as we need.

No doubt, Christ never spoke an idle word. The shortened form of our Gospel-story may account for much of it that is now hard to understand. Speaking to simple uneducated men, the common people who "heard Him gladly," our Lord's style will have been, as a rule, very plain and simple. The difficulty we experience to-day here and there in grasping our Lord's meaning may be due to the absence of the simple illustrations, the connecting threads which Christ gave at the time and which disappear in the brief summary of our Gospels.

For some reasons we might wish, at times, that the sources of our information for a Life of Christ were more extensive. But this apparent defect is not all loss. As we have already hinted, the Evangelists wrote for a public composed of practical men of the world and not of specialists, and we should be deeply grateful that the Holy Spirit has enabled them to realize and paint a great Personality and a great historic scene without deluging us with that mass of erudition under which modern biography so often staggers. We deliberately assign this result to the work of the Holy Spirit, for we are persuaded that these summaries of the Evangelists bear God's own stamp and mint-mark. Inspiration is often burdened with more than it is able to bear, but there is no denying the fact that Inspiration means Divine prompting. The importance of this divine prompting

cannot possibly be exaggerated so long as we clearly understand that it does not carry infallibility with it or work impossible miracles.

Now Christ had all along promised that "the Holy Spirit shall bring all things to your remembrance. . . . He shall take of Mine and show it unto you." This does *not* mean that the Apostles would be able to recall all that Christ had ever spoken, but it *does* mean that the Holy Spirit,—stimulating memories already keenly sensitive to Christ's impressions and retentive of His words, through intense love of Him,—would recall to their memory all that was necessary for their purpose.

The highest inspiration is often the rare gift of judicious selection ; the feeling for what is true and eternal among a large mass of facts of varying value, and the power of giving the Truth expression in its most telling form. And in our Gospels we see the directing influence of the Holy Spirit not least in the selection out of an immense number of facts of just those facts which best illustrate the special truths to be pressed home.

How often do books, of high excellence in other respects, give us reason to regret that their authors have not been able to resist the seductions of elaborate detail which beset most modern writers! "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." This holds equally true of his biography. "The part of Lady Macbeth is just 250 lines long. How many

a large biography in two large volumes tells us less of what is really essential about its hero!" (Burkitt.)

Even in history proper, as Auguste Comte weightily remarks, the most important facts are those which are best known and remembered, and the least dependent on an exhaustive assortment of details for their true appreciation. Subsequent research has hardly been able to modify Bacon's portrait of Henry VII., yet he wrote his book at a time when he was remote from the means of knowledge accessible even in his day, which did not represent a tithe of the knowledge on the subject accessible now.

So with our Evangelists. They may not give us all the words and deeds of Christ. Some of these words and deeds, even when recorded, may be imperfectly reported. But they do possess the rare gift of judicious selection, as well as a sympathetic insight into character, and this enables them to atone, and more than atone, for these other defects, if defects they be. They catch the true expression of Christ's character, the salient points of His Teaching, and this is of infinitely more value to us than a *verbatim* report, if the Gospels "are written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," which is their claim (S. John xx. 30, 31).

One word more. It is not too much to say that had our Lord wished the exact words of His dis-

courses to be reported in full, this could easily have been done, and for this reason. In His day, the teaching of the Rabbis was entirely oral. Their pupils heard their teaching, and, by frequent repetition, committed it to memory word for word. In this way they could repeat in a few years as much as is contained in our New Testament *verbatim*.

Christ could have trained His disciples in the same way, but He not only refrained from following the universal system of teaching current in His day, He deliberately set His face against it and discouraged it. Except one short prayer, He would use no set *forms of words*. The one refrain of Christ's teaching is ever the same: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." As we have seen, He was a foe to the worship of the letter. He, Who was ever impressing upon His hearers the necessity of reading the Old Testament and interpreting His own words and acts in the spirit, would not have cared or wished that His discourses should be preserved and transmitted entire and word for word. This spirit of Christ His disciples had caught. They laid no stress on the exact words of our Lord's teaching^a, but so perfectly worded were some of our Lord's shorter sayings that they could not be forgotten, and have persisted in their original form.

Therefore, in the New Testament, the very absence

^a Even the Lord's Prayer, and the words of consecration at the Institution of the last Supper are differently reported (cf. S. Matth. vi. and S. Luke xi. ; S. Matth. xxvi. and S. Luke xxii.).

of that "literary piety," which we worship overmuch, shows clearly "the finger of God and the wisdom of God" in these summaries which so many deplore.

(b) *Our Gospels are imperfect translations.* The plea of those who advocate this view may be broadly stated thus :—Christ spoke Aramaic, or modern Hebrew, while our Gospels are written in Greek. Now every tongue is as much part and parcel of those who create it as is their religion or literature. Their language is made by them and for them to express their own peculiar feelings and thoughts. So much so that, given the vocabulary of a people, it is possible to reconstruct their culture, occupations, and character. A borrowed tongue is therefore a very imperfect vehicle of expression. Palestine was the home of a passionately emotional people, subordinating everything to feeling, so that their religion is the excited impassioned outpouring of their souls in ecstatic rapture, their literature is the glowing utterance of emotional minds, their language is essentially sensuous, picturesque, and as emotional as themselves. Greece, on the other hand, is the home of reason, philosophy, art and taste, and its language naturally reflects the Greek character with its love of harmony and proportion (*μηδὲν ἄγαν*). It is a moral impossibility to translate the deeply emotional utterances of God-rapt Hebrew hearts into the calm thoughtful language of Greeks. The thing cannot be done without allowing some of the

subtlest elements of the original message to evaporate. The heart cannot speak in the language of the head, neither can holy Jewish spiritual truths be voiced in the unhallowed accents of a pagan tongue. Therefore, our Greek translation of Christ's Aramaic utterances is imperfect at best and probably often misleading.

But was Christ's teaching couched in such emotional and passionate language that it cannot be translated into Greek words? Is it also true that Greek is only the cold language of speculative reason and calm thought? Will any one familiar with Greek literature venture to say that the Greeks knew nothing of the intensity of passion or the outbursts of love and rage and grief that thrilled Hebrew breasts?

It is quite in a different direction that we must look for the failure of the Greek tongue as a vehicle of Hebrew thought. Human nature is the same all the world over, so is its language of the emotions. But the Hebrews were intensely spiritual, religious enthusiasts. This the Greeks most certainly were not. Their Greek tongue crystallized all their thoughts, wants, and experience, but it contained no words to express the ideas of a Hebrew theology of which Greece knew nothing. How then are Jewish tenets to be translated into a tongue which has no words to express them?

This would be a serious and all but insuperable difficulty did we not know that, for two hundred years

before Christ appeared, this defect in the Greek vocabulary had been fully remedied. Not only had Greek become the universal language since 300 B.C., but Jews had adopted it and vastly enriched its vocabulary.

We must remember that the Jews of the Dispersion numbered close upon three million souls. A vast number of these lived in Greek-speaking countries and knew no other tongue. Had they so cut themselves away from their religion that they had no words in their adopted language in which to express the ideas of their Hebrew faith?

More than this. About 200 B.C., the Old Testament Scriptures had already been translated into Greek in the famous Septuagint version, and this is a consideration to which too much weight cannot possibly be attached. The history of the origin of the Septuagint is still more or less shrouded in mystery, but there is no denying the fact that its influence was epoch-making.

In the first place, it was "the first Apostle to the Gentiles," as a modern Jewish historian quaintly puts it. To Greeks and Romans alike the Jews could now present with pride the writings of Moses and the Prophets in proof that they too were in possession of a priceless literature. In this way, the Septuagint contributed not a little to the spread of the knowledge of the One true and righteous God, thus paving the road for Christianity.

But the Septuagint rendered another immense ser-

vice to Christianity. It universalized, if it did not actually create, the peculiar Greek dialect in which the New Testament was afterwards written. This new dialect wedded the Greek language to Hebrew thought. Two centuries beforehand, it expressed, in clumsy Greek it may be, still in Greek words and phraseology, all those deeply spiritual ideas for which the scattered Greek Jews and the Greek translators of the Hebrew Testament had somehow to find phrases. We can readily understand how familiar these Greek phrases must have become everywhere in the course of two hundred years' daily use. Any one can also see at a glance that the task of the Apostles and Evangelists would have been far more difficult than it was, if they had not found ready to their hands a Greek dialect far more flexible than the pure Greek of the classics, and a ready-made Greek religious phraseology widely understood and admirably adapted to convey their Gospel message.

In the face of this, the alleged objection breaks down. It was as easy for the Gospel-writers to convey Christ's exact Aramaic message in Greek words^b as it is for us to translate their Greek into English, and it would be pure hair-splitting to say that a reader of our Authorized or Revised Version is not in full touch with the message of Christ. Good

^b Mistranslations do occur in our Greek Gospels, but we must lay the blame, not at the door of the Greek tongue, but of the Evangelists themselves. They misunderstood our Lord's Aramaic, or were too poor Greek scholars to express it properly.

translations are not the poor things some people try to make out. The trained eye and ear may miss, even in the best translations, some of the delicate notes, something of the subtle light and shade of the original, but, in other respects, a good translation does faithfully reproduce the original, even in minute details.

(c) *Our Gospels are late records.* Many Christians are often troubled when they learn for the first time that our Gospels only came into existence 30, 40, or even 60 years after Christ's Ministry on earth ended. They would like to believe that, immediately after the Ascension, Christ's Apostles, inspired by the Holy Ghost, set to work to compose our Gospels with the facts still quite fresh in their memory, and with written notes (taken at the time) of many of the incidents.

It is a natural wish; yet, if we bear in mind two important facts, we shall see that it is better as it is.

We must not imagine that there was a thirty years' interval of silence and apathy, a period of oblivion during which the materials for a Life of Christ were allowed to remain unheeded, till it suddenly dawned on the Apostles and others that, if a record of our Lord's Ministry was to be written, it must be now or never, for everything about Him would soon be dim and vague.

There never was such an interval of silence. There

was not one moment during all this time when the Gospel was not being written, though not one word of its story may have been committed to writing^c.

Before any true history of a great epoch can be written, much time and thought must be devoted to a careful accumulation, sifting, and assimilation of facts. We shall see that, during all the years intervening between the Ascension and the composition of our written Gospels, this preliminary collation and selection of facts was precisely what was being done. Our Gospels, in their present form, are the ripe fruit of the accumulated evidence and labour of eye-witnesses who had been with Christ all through the eventful years "beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day when He was received up from us" (Acts i. 22).

We have formed but a faint conception of the Personality of Christ, of the profound impression He made upon His disciples, of what He must have been in Himself to have revolutionized history as He has done, if we can fancy that, after thirty years, the memory of the Man and His Work could have lost its freshness or grown in any way dim.

From the outset, Jesus was His disciples' Rabbi, and a great Prophet in their eyes. At Cæsarea Philippi He became something much greater. There S. Peter guessed His secret and made his confession: "Thou art the Christ." From that day, at any

^c As a matter of fact, we know S. Matthew did commit some of it to writing about 50 A.D.

rate, He was to His disciples the long-expected Messiah.

Knowing this, is it likely that His disciples were not, all through His Ministry, treasuring His every word and act, and pondering them in their hearts?

We can also clearly see from the Gospels that our Lord concentrated His main attention on the training of the Twelve, and from day to day was impressing definite teaching upon their minds and hearts. Little by little He has to open their eyes to the startling and (to them) unpalatable fact of His coming sufferings. Like the rest of the Jews, they expected a triumphant Messiah. Christ openly tells them that before He their Messiah can come in His glory, He must first ascend into heaven. He must needs die. He must needs rise again. Only through the gate of Death can He enter upon His full Messianic Kingdom.

We can readily picture the shock this revelation of a suffering, dying Messiah must have given His disciples. "Be it far from Thee, Lord ; this shall not happen unto Thee."

Now is it likely that the disciples could ever forget the new and strange things Christ was thus teaching them from day to day? They eagerly drank in His every Word, hung on His lips, pondered over His strange utterances, discussed them among themselves. They expressly tell us so.

And when that tragic last Week came, was there one single incident or detail of it that would not

stamp itself indelibly on their minds? "They crucified Him," and at that moment all was dark to the disciples. Then came the Resurrection, and now at last they understood.

Can we believe that men who had witnessed with their own eyes that brief and tragic career of Jesus of Nazareth, so full of surprises and shocks, could ever forget?

What was their natural attitude, after our Lord's Resurrection, towards One Who was their God? Jesus, His Life and Teaching, was the one subject that monopolised their thoughts, their conversation, their hearts, their worship, their life. More than ever now that their eyes were opened to see not only "the sufferings of Christ," but "the glories that should follow them" (1 S. Peter i. 11) they gathered and pondered His every word. They treasured in their hearts every incident, every utterance of His, studied them, read their true meaning into them, preached them, faithfully taught them to all who came into the Christian brotherhood (Acts ii. 42).

But they were not yet fully prepared to record the Gospel-story for all times and for all people. They stood too near to the events to see them in their true perspective. Besides, for a long time after Christ's death, the Apostles had still much to learn and unlearn before they could fully understand the Christ Whom they loved so well. Naturally dull of understanding, on their own showing, as S. Matth.

xv. 16 ; xvi. 6—12 ; S. Mark ix. 32 ; S. Luke ix. 49 ; xxii. 24 ; xxiv. 11, 25 ; S. John xii. 16 amply prove, not until they had had time to grow in Christ were they in a position to grasp the true significance of His Life and work. It wanted time, thought and experience before the Gospel-story could be truly written.

In our next chapter we shall endeavour to show how this was achieved. But there is one other consideration for the delay in the composition of our Gospels which we should like to suggest.

Strange as it sounds, for Christ's complete Portrait we want more than His Portrait. The character of a great Personality is known not least through his friends whom He has stamped with his own personality and moulded after his own character. Even so, in order to understand Christ fully, we must also see what He made of the men who unreservedly surrendered themselves to His influence. In these He reveals and expresses Himself, or, as S. Paul puts it, they are "living Epistles of Christ," His own handwriting (2 Cor. iii. 3).

The Gospels are not written by Apostles, but they embody their teaching. Had these Gospels, and other New Testament books, been written immediately after the Ascension, we should, of course, have seen Christ already reflected in His Apostles. But the reflected Portrait would have been faint and blurred by reason of their emulous selfishness, impatience, dulness of understanding. We have to

wait years till the solvent of Christ's Spirit has eliminated these obscuring flaws, and then we see Christ's likeness.

These are some of the reasons why we should not regret the years that elapsed between Christ's Death and the composition of our Gospels. The interval is a clear gain, and more than compensates for the few defects for which it is also responsible. All these years were needed for the collection, digestion, and judicious selection of the necessary material. They were needed too for the handwriting in Christ's living epistles to become clearer.

We know it will be urged that this is taking too human a view of the composition of our Gospels, laying all the stress on the human factor and ignoring their Divine Inspiration.

We have spoken so often on Inspiration that it is growing tedious, but we shall not refer to it after this.

The Holy Spirit prompts, It never dictates. God works through men in a perfectly natural way, without overriding a man's individuality. The prompting is an impulse given to the man's own thoughts. The inspired thought is not magically communicated. There is nothing supernatural or abnormal in the result produced, placing it out of all connection with the previous experiences and thoughts of the man inspired. All his past training and knowledge enter into what he now produces,

and the result could not have been brought about without them. Our Gospels prove this.

The prefaces to S. Luke and S. John expressly tell us that the Evangelists wrote their Gospels, not from a knowledge of events supernaturally imparted, but from what they had themselves seen and heard, or received from trustworthy sources and eye-witnesses.

Why should the Apostles themselves have been chosen only from those who had been with our Lord all through His Ministry (Acts i. 21, 22), if supernatural information dictated by the Holy Spirit was enough in itself? If the facts and sayings the Apostles preached were the mere dictation of the Holy Ghost, what, then, is the meaning of S. Peter's declaration to the Jewish Council: "We cannot but speak the things which we have heard and seen"? Why did He not rather say: "We cannot but speak the things which the Holy Spirit puts into our mouths"? If the Holy Spirit superseded human knowledge, how can we account for the fact that *inspired* Apostles held such divergent and antagonistic opinions upon matters essential to the well-being of Christ's Church, as Acts xv. and Gal. ii. reveal? Why do the Gospel-writers occasionally contradict one another? Why does our Lord criticize parts of the Old Testament? Why does S. Paul admit that even inspired men now only prophesy and know in part (1 Cor. xiii. 9)? Why does our moral sense condemn some passages in the Bible

(e.g. Ps. cxxxvii. 9)? The Bible is not all on the same level even in a S. Paul or S. John's writings. How are we to explain this on the dictation-theory of Inspiration? Does the Holy Spirit indite one chapter from a supernatural height and drop to a lower plane in the next?

These questions supply their own answer.

CHAPTER VI.

ORAL TRADITION.

WE have seen that, after Christ's Death, His followers treasured their Master's sayings, studied them, preached them, taught them to all who came into the Christian brotherhood. The story of Jesus' Life, His deeds and His words, became the guide of every individual Christian, of the whole Church. What He had taught was the staple-matter of all Christian instruction and worship. On Christ's Life and Work they modelled their lives and all their actions.

But it is morally certain that, for many years, the Gospel-story was transmitted by word of mouth only. And to this body of teaching thus handed down by word of mouth is given the name of Oral Tradition.

Oral Tradition was by no means a new departure in Palestine. It was the universal rule. There was an unreasoning prejudice against religious books of exposition. The teaching of the Rabbis was entirely oral, and had to be learnt by heart. "Commit nothing to writing," was a maxim with the Rabbis. In course of time there grew up in Israel, side by side with the Written Law, a great mass of unwritten legal

traditions or "words of the wise," consisting mainly of interpretations and expansions of the Written Law. Except the Sadducees, all Jews revered this unwritten oral tradition as even superior to the written Scripture. Indeed, it was commonly held that the Covenant was originally founded on the oral word of God, and not on the written Law, because it is stated in Exodus xxxiv. 27: "*after the tenor of these words* I have made a covenant with Israel."

In the Talmud we are told that "Moses received the oral Law direct from God and delivered it to Joshua. Joshua delivered it to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the Great Synagogue." To the question why oral tradition was not written down at the same time as the written Law, the Jewish answer was that Moses did indeed desire to write it down but God forbade it, because in the days to come Israel would be scattered among the Gentiles. Then the written Law would be taken from them, but the oral tradition would remain to be their distinctive badge as well as their guide.

Of course, this explanation cannot bear the searchlight of criticism, but it well expresses the Jewish view of the sacredness of oral tradition in our Lord's day. So infinitely superior to the written Law was tradition considered that it was a common saying with the Jews: "The Law is water, but the words of the scribes are wine." In the eyes of Pharisees,

elders and scribes, a man might have perfect knowledge of the Scriptures, but if he did not also know the oral Law, and had never been one of the pupils of the "wise" (i.e., scribes or Rabbis), he was looked upon as an ignoramus. He was an "empty cistern," and was called by the contemptuous name "am-haarets," one of the "people of the land." Hence the expression in S. John vii. 49, "this people (rabble), which knoweth not the law, are accursed." It was on this ground that "they perceived that John and Peter were ignorant and unlearned men" (Acts iv. 13).

If we bear in mind this extraordinary reverence among the Jews for oral tradition, and remember that the Apostles were Palestinian Jews born and bred, it will explain much. We shall readily understand how easy and natural it was, in such an atmosphere, for the Apostles to build up a body of oral teaching, an oral tradition in connection with the Life and teaching of our Lord which would become recognized as sacred and authoritative in the Church. Of course they would remember our Lord's strictures on tradition-tyranny, and safeguard themselves against all possibility of any such abuse.

Christianity in those days was not a book-religion. Faith sprang from hearing, not from reading. The living presence and voice of the eye-witnesses of our Lord's Ministry formed the repository of the Gospel-story. It was preserved by oral tradition pure and simple, and not through written documents.

Jesus Himself had apparently written nothing^a. The only occasion on which He is ever spoken of as writing (S. John viii. 6—8) is in connection with the accusation brought against the woman taken in adultery. "Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not." Even were this passage genuine, it proves nothing, for the words our Lord wrote are not recorded. Christ's teaching, like God's, cannot be cramped into books. The thought of Jesus is preserved in a Diviner way, in "living Epistles" (2 Cor. iii. 3). "I will put My Law in their mind, and write it in their hearts."

We may be morally certain that if Christ had written anything bearing on His teaching, we should have heard of it. Evidently He did not. It is not likely that, for many a year, His Apostles did so either, in connection with the Gospel-story. For one thing, as we have seen, the hour for that had not yet come; and, as they were daily expecting the return of their Lord, they were far more concerned with the all-important work of preaching

^a "Palestine was a land of culture. This culture is reflected in every word and simile of Jesus, but in His Ministry our Lord had no need of all the means which this culture afforded Him. He could only be, He only wished to be and to offer to others what He was in Himself, a complete self-sufficing Personality, whose creative energy proceeded from God as its only source. He must call into life in the souls of others the treasure of His own soul, leave His own impress upon His environment, and through His followers upon mankind by means of *direct personal influence*. Our Lord could use the pen, and His Parables show that He was specially gifted for authorship, but He has not committed Himself to writing." *Von Soden*.

and catechizing than writing books, even if they had the literary instinct to do it. Besides, the Jewish custom of those days went dead against such a practice. It was considered positively wrong to commit oral tradition to writing. It must be learnt by heart, and stored in the memory.

Out of this universal Jewish custom arose, among the Jews, a special qualification for oral instruction and oral transmission. Their memory was capable of phenomenal feats, and it became a second nature faithfully to remember all they heard almost verbatim^b.

If this was the case with the pupils of an ordinary Rabbi, how much more will it hold good of the disciples of our Lord. As Jews, they also will have been gifted with excellent memories. For three whole years they had been day by day in the company of Jesus, *their* Rabbi in a sense that no other Rabbi was to his pupils. Other Rabbis spoke to their pupils of the coming Messiah; Jesus *was* Messiah to His disciples, as we have already seen, and His Resurrection proved to them that He was God Himself.

Jesus' sayings and doings were, therefore, God's own actual words and deeds in their eyes. Like Moses of old, they had seen God face to face, not dimly but openly, not for forty days, but for thirty

^b Max Müller quotes the case of an Indian lady who could repeat from memory the whole of the Rig-Veda; and Archdeacon Moule catechized children in China who knew our Gospels by heart.

times forty days. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you; which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life which was from the beginning." "For the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, and we beheld His Glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father."

For these men, what need was there of a written record? In their eyes, after the Ascension, Christ's acts and deeds were God's own, and far more sacred than anything in the Old Testament. The record of that Life was more safely treasured in their hearts than in any written book. Therefore, for years and years it was by the living word, and not out of a book, that the Gospel was preached; in men's hearts, and not in written pages, that it was safely preserved.

Thus the Apostolic Church had, instead of a New Testament, a body of teaching which was wholly unwritten,—an oral tradition. Its repositories were the living eye-witnesses who had "compained with Jesus, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that day that He was taken up" into heaven.

But this oral tradition was a gradual growth, and there were definite stages in its formation. Apart from the great facts of the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension,—it took time before the Apostles themselves realized which was the most judicious selection to make out of the mass of incidents and

sayings which were treasured in their hearts, or the most appropriate "form of sound words" into which the Gospel-story should be cast.

From the outset, the Apostles were "preachers of Christ" as well as teachers. Believing, as they firmly did, that our Lord's second Coming was to be speedy and in their own lifetime, they preached Christ "in season and out of season," daily and at all hours of the day, to all and any whom they could reach (Acts v. 42 ; iv. 17 sq. ; xxviii. 30 sq.). But preaching was not enough. It was essential to instruct the new converts. When we remember how slowly the disciples themselves assimilated the teaching of their Master, what patience and pains on His part it needed to instruct and train them in the faith we shall realize the necessity of instructing the new converts in the articles of the Christian Faith, and the hard work this involved. We know that very soon these converts were counted by thousands.

For awhile, the Apostles and other eye-witnesses had to do the work of catechists as well as of preachers. For this purpose, they adopted the usual Jewish method of storing the memories of their pupils day by day, week by week, with portions of the Gospel-story.

In Palestine itself, this systematic training would not be so difficult at the beginning. Palestine is a very small place. Among the people of Jerusalem, and the crowds from Galilee to whom the great Prophet of Nazareth had been a familiar

Figure, the main facts of Christ's Life would be too well known for Jewish converts to need special instruction in them. Even to a man like Cornelius, not a Jew, but a Roman officer, S. Peter considers it unnecessary to enter into details. "That word, *as you know*, which was published throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached." He assumes that Cornelius knows all the main facts, and merely mentioning "how that God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost and with power; and He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed with the devil, for God was with Him," S. Peter at once proceeds to press home to Cornelius' heart the truth that this Crucified Jesus is none other than God Himself, "Whom they slew and hanged on a tree, Him God raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly. And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He Which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 36—43).

But, as years passed, and the news of glad tidings was carried to fresh and ever widening circles,—and especially when it spread outside Palestine,—a much more detailed presentation of the Gospel-story was required. To people who knew the main facts of our Lord's Life, it might be enough to insist on an acknowledgment of the Godhead of Jesus and a belief

in the historical truth of His Resurrection. But it is idle to preach that Jesus is the Christ, Messiah, God Himself, unless the preacher's hearers know who and what Jesus is. It conveys no meaning to proclaim that an unknown Person is risen from the dead, is now at God's right hand and will one day come in glory to judge the quick and dead. S. Peter's brief summary to Cornelius will no longer do. It must be greatly expanded. The Gospel-story must be told from the beginning, and the converts must be systematically taught the new faith after their baptism.

Strange as it may seem to us, converts throughout the Apostolic age were baptized at once, immediately after the Gospel-message had touched their hearts and they had professed their faith in the risen Lord. The instances of the converts on the Day of Pentecost, of Cornelius and his friends, of the Philipian jailer and his household show that little or no preparation was required before baptism. It was administered there and then, and the probation and teaching came afterwards (cf. Acts ii. 38—41 ; viii. 12 ; xvi. 31, 33 ; xviii. 8 ; x. 43—48).

But after baptism the teaching of the "catechumens" was very thorough. As much patience and labour was devoted to the "watering" as to the "planting" (1 Cor. iii. 8). A close study of S. Paul's Epistles will show that his Gentile converts had a more intimate and living acquaintance with the facts of the Gospel-history and of the Old Testament

han is usual with Christians in our own day. The great majority of the members of the Pauline Churches had been recently converted from heathenism. Before their conversion they had not the slightest knowledge of either the Gospel-story or the Jewish Scriptures. Yet, within a year or so, S. Paul is able to appeal in the most natural way to their knowledge of the character and Life of Christ, and make frequent allusions to Old Testament passages. "I speak to them that know the Law," he says to the Romans (Rom. vii. 1 ; cf. 1 Cor. ix. 13 ; x. 1 sqq. ; Gal. iv. 21 sqq., &c.).

This presupposes long and systematic instruction in the Gospel-story and in the Hebrew Scriptures. How and by whom had this instruction been given?

We have seen that the Apostles in the earliest days were catechists as well as preachers. But the Apostles and other "eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word" were few in number. Acts i. 15 tells us that "the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty" after our Lord's Ascension. The labour of spreading the new faith, and catechizing the thousands of converts, even within Palestine, would soon outgrow their power of coping with the work ; and we can hardly assume that the whole 120 were subsequently engaged in this evangelistic work, or qualified to do so.

Who, then, was to give the necessary instruction? The Apostles had devoted much time in the earliest days to this all-important duty, but they had other

work to do. Catechizing was essential, but it demanded none of the higher spiritual gifts possessed by Apostles or prophets, who were divinely set apart as God's mouthpieces for the conversion of mankind. Others, if properly trained, could catechize as well as they, perhaps even better, for it requires the special "gift of teaching," as well as a faithful knowledge of the Gospel-story, sympathy with pupils, and much patience.

Thus it very soon became necessary to relieve the Apostles from the labour of catechizing, as much as possible, if they were to do the work for which they had been specially commissioned by our Lord and "preach Christ." Precisely as the order of deacons was established because the Apostles recognized that "it is not reason that we should leave the Word and serve tables," even so it was now imperative to appoint a separate order of regular authorized catechists or teachers.

From the first, catechists were held in high esteem, as is the case with all teachers in Eastern lands. They were the "scribes" and Rabbis of the Christian Church, and S. Paul ranks them next to Apostles and prophets (1 Cor. xii. 28). Their number will have been large, for every important church would require one. If we may judge from the material on which they had to work in Gentile churches, and the good results which they produced, their work must have been very hard and have monopolized all their time and energy. S. Paul implies as much, for he

makes the same claim for them as for the Apostles : " Let him that is catechized in the Word give of his good things to him that catechizeth " (*τῷ κατηχοῦντι*) (Gal. vi. 6)—and S. Paul strongly held that " if any man will not work, neither shall he eat."

Who taught the catechists ? In the first instance, the Apostles were their teachers. Thus S. Mark was taught by S. Peter himself. This we know on the authority of Papias, who obtained his information from a " disciple of the Lord, personally acquainted with the Apostles themselves." This very early tradition is accepted by many of even the most advanced critics as genuine, and this is what it tells us^c : " Mark having become Peter's interpreter wrote accurately all that Peter had remembered (or, mentioned), though he did not record in order that which was either said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him ; but subsequently attached himself to Peter, who used to frame his teaching to meet the wants (of his hearers), but not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses. So Mark committed no error, as he wrote down some particulars just as Peter narrated them. For he took heed to one thing, to omit none of the facts that he heard, and to make no false statement (in his account) of them^d."

In other words, S. Peter catechized his convert,

^c Westcott's rendering ; *Study of the Gospels*, 184.

^d It has been suggested that S. Mark (" the minister"), S. Luke (Acts xvi. 10), and the unknown author of S. Matthew were catechists.

S. Mark, who later became his fellow-worker. He taught him carefully that oral tradition which, after S. Peter's death, S. Mark many years later^d embodied in his Gospel.

And Papias' statement also gives us most important testimony on three points in connection with the Oral Tradition problem. (1) It is Apostolic in its origin; (2) not composed "in order"; (3) a judicious selection.

This not only corroborates what we should have conjectured, but it is amply confirmed by the New Testament itself.

That it was of Apostolic origin is clearly shown by such passages as S. Luke i. 2; and how jealously the oral tradition was guarded and watched by the Apostles is also evident from Gal. i. 6—9; 1 Thess. iv. 1, 2; 2 Thess. ii. 15; 2 Tim. i. 13; ii. 2; iii. 14; Tit. i. 9. It was handed down as the solid foundation of faith from one to another (1 Cor. xv. 3; xi. 23; 2 Tim. ii. 2) and treasured as a sacred deposit (1 Tim. vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 14). This Apostolic tradition is spoken of as the "form of doctrine" (Rom. vi. 17), "the form of sound words" (2 Tim. i. 13), "the words of the faith and the good doctrine" (1 Tim. iv. 6), "the good deposit"^e (1 Tim. vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 14). The "teachers" were very closely watched by the Apostles, and any who taught any doctrine at all inconsistent with this sacred Apostolic tradition were at once denounced in no measured terms; "let

^d Irenæus c. Haer. III. i. i.

^e R.V. margin.

him be accursed, even if it be we ourselves, or an angel from heaven (Gal. i. 6—9).

The New Testament, based as it is on oral tradition, also tends to show that this Apostolic Teaching was not "in order," i.e. arranged in chronological sequence. From S. Luke's day (S. Luke i. 3) downwards, endless attempts have been made to write "Lives of Christ" "in order," assigning the various events and sayings to their proper occasions, and they have all signally failed. Oral tradition may have given the incidents of some one day, or of the Last Week, in their historical sequence, but in the main body of the Ministry such sequence was disregarded by the Apostolic teachers themselves, and we cannot reconstruct it now. This is especially the case with our Lord's sayings. Our Lord's "words" seem to have formed the kernel of oral tradition, and we have a very early and reliable tradition quoted by Papias that they were, at an early date, collected and written in a book by the Apostle Matthew (50 A.D.). These sayings were specially treasured, and regarded as the final court of appeal (e.g. 1 Cor. vii. 10—25 ; ix. 14 ; xi. 23 ; xiv. 37 ; 1 Thess. iv. 2 ; 1 Tim. v. 18). But we shall see that, as a general rule, no two Gospels agree as to the occasions on which the various discourses of our Lord were spoken.

The New Testament only represents a portion of the contents of oral tradition, as will be shown later, so we cannot quote the "judicious selection" made by our Evangelists in proof of the judicious selection

of Oral Tradition itself. But such a passage as S. John xx. 30, hyperbolical as it may be, fairly represents the opinion of the primitive Church itself on the subject towards the end of the Apostolic age.

Thus we can clearly trace three stages in the development of Oral Tradition, and these three distinct *strata* are patent in our Gospels to-day^f.

(1) In the first stage, Oral Tradition merely supplements Apostolic preaching. The Church is still mainly confined to Palestine, and the original eye-witnesses, whether they were 120 (Acts i. 15) or 500 (1 Cor. xv. 6), together with the evangelists whom they have trained, can still cope with the work in person. In this first cycle of "tradition," therefore, there is little theological or spiritual teaching. It would comprise an outline-sketch of our Lord's Ministry, "beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day when our Lord was taken up into heaven." There would be a selection from our Lord's chief actions of mercy and love in His miracles of healing, references to His disputes with Jewish religious leaders, to His claims and to the impression He made on His hearers. Some of the more important conversations and sayings would

^f N.B. In what follows, (1) S. Mark, (2) S. Luke, (3) S. Matthew are, for the moment, assumed to be fairly representative types of these three strata of oral tradition. We shall have occasion to qualify this statement later. Our present threefold classification is merely intended to act as a rough guide. Our data do not allow us to dogmatise on the subject.

also be given. Naturally, a much fuller account would be given of the last week of our Lord's Life on earth, because of its intrinsic importance.

But oral tradition at this stage is quite supplementary to preaching, and assumes a knowledge of practical and vital truths. We find in it the barest reference to Resurrection appearances of our Lord, and, as our Lord's sayings are household words, there is a dearth of parables and discourses.

In other words, it is an expansion of that portion of S. Peter's address to Cornelius which tells us how "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil: Whom they slew and hanged on a tree." The other portion, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, for God was with Him; how God raised Him up the third day and showed Him openly; how He was ordained of God to be Judge of the quick and dead; how to Him all the prophets give witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins"—all this was preached day by day and was common Christian property.

(2) But as time went on, this was not enough. Churches were springing up rapidly all over the Roman Empire. Twenty years or so after Christ's Death, all Southern Europe was studded with them, so was Asia Minor and even Egypt. The Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists could not be everywhere, yet converts must be taught their new faith. No

previous knowledge could now be assumed. A much fuller "form of sound words," a complete Oral Tradition must be drawn up by the Apostles and authorized for common use in the various churches, for the guidance of evangelists and catechists, as well as for the instruction of converts.

As in the first stage, Oral Tradition begins with the Baptism of John, but much fuller details are given (e.g. of the Temptation). Christ's sayings are no longer assumed as household words. Whole groups of these sayings are given a first and foremost place and form the kernel of the teaching. The "sayings" are often massed together in discourses as was done in the Palestine Church. The historical facts on which Christianity is based, and a much fuller account of the Ministry are now inserted. The appearances after the Resurrection and many more parables are given in detail. Old Testament prophecies and the spiritual teaching and significance of many of the facts are included.

This would enable men such as Aquila and Apollos, and other catechists and evangelists like them, to possess an authentic oral account almost equivalent, if not quite, to our New Testament.

(3) The third stage is reached about the year 60—70 A.D. Many of the Apostles are now dead. The Church is a fully organized ecclesiastical institution, experiencing many trials. Oral tradition becomes more apologetic and ecclesiastical in type. It is unconsciously interpreted in the light of the

needs of the day, furnishing rules for Church worship and discipline, for ministers and missionaries, the conduct of individual Christians, and consolation in times of persecution. This is also the period which goes behind the old Oral Tradition, and gives us the Birth and infancy stories^g, of which S. Mark and S. Paul seem to know little or nothing.

In this way, or in a manner closely akin to it, there grew up what we may call an oral "common-stock Gospel" according to the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, and under their direction. Preachers, missionaries, catechists, would be familiar with it, and use it as we do our present Gospels. At the outset, this oral tradition would be the same everywhere, the "use" recognized in the head Church of Jerusalem^h.

But soon, little by little, slight variations crept in. We may account for them in two ways.

We have already mentioned that, in those days, verbal exactitude, "literary piety," was ignored and even discouraged by Christians. The oral gospel, therefore, was not learnt by heart, as we teach our

^g This admits of a natural explanation. It has long been pointed out that on a matter of such delicacy, the Virgin-Mother would not be likely to speak till very late in life, or when Joseph was dead, and even then only to a woman, from whom S. Luke obtained the facts. Adverse critics, on the other hand, maintain that the attitude of Christ's own mother, who never seems to have grasped our Lord's Messiahship (cf. S. Mark iii. 21 and 31 sqq.), seems passing strange if she held in her heart such profound knowledge.

^h Harnack is convinced that it grew up between the years 30—70 A.D. on Palestine soil and more particularly in Jerusalem.

Church Catechism, but in its spirit and substance. This tendency easily lends itself to variations. This would be more the case with Gentiles than Jews. In Palestine, as we have seen, memories were phenomenally developed. There, as is the habit with people who read and write little, the gospel-story transmitted from lip to lip was repeated almost in the same words every time, and its form would become more or less stereotyped.

Not so with Greeks. They are an imaginative and eloquent race. Their verbal fluency and artistic imagination would constantly make them vary the words of the narrative, without departing from accuracy or blurring the vital truths of oral tradition.

This was one cause of variation. But there was another influence at work which gave rise to variations of far greater import. After all, it is immaterial whether we say with S. Matthew "forgive us our debts," or, with S. Luke, "forgive us our sins"; or whether we are told in one version "behold him that was possessed with devils," while another writes, "behold the demoniac."

But there are variations which do matter. Churches differ as men differ, and there were differences of view, differences of perspective, differences of theological expression in the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome and Alexandria. For instance, the Church of Jerusalem laid considerable stress on the obligations of the Mosaic Law, while the Pauline Churches deemed that they were free from the yoke of the Law. Christianity in all

the Churches was, of course, one and indivisible in its essence, but it naturally had its local colouring. East and West differ, and, in any case, Greek oral tradition would have adapted itself to its new environment even if a cosmopolitan Paul of Antioch had not stamped his own individuality upon it before preaching it to Gentiles. Therefore, more and more, in course of time in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, Rome, Africa, local "uses" of oral tradition must needs spring into existence, as actually happened, but the variations were mainly in minor matters¹.

It is well to note these sources of variation in oral tradition. It will explain much when we come (in our next chapter) to trace the rise of written gospels. Our present Gospels only represent a few of many attempts to embody the Gospel-story in written documents. But up to the end of the first century, at any rate, and probably much later, no written gospel succeeded in taking the place of oral tradition. Till then, oral tradition reigned supreme. It was the New Testament of the Christian Church, the authorized text of all its teaching and preaching, the final court of appeal. It was only because our four Gospels were found to conform to this infallible test that they were accepted and canonized, whilst others were rejected. Directly or indirectly it is on oral tradition that our Gospels are based.

¹ e.g. even in Palestine, the author of S. Matthew adds to Christ's strictures on divorce "except for fornication," looking at the matter from the Jewish point of view.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RISE OF WRITTEN GOSPELS.

IT may come as a surprise to some readers to be told that, from as early as 50 A.D. onwards, there sprang up a whole crop of written gospel-narratives, now mostly lost. This fact is based on very early Christian evidence, and on many other grounds.

The writings of our four Evangelists represent but a small fraction of contemporary gospel-literature. They are a "survival of the fittest." By the middle of the second century, they had established their position unchallengeably. On their own intrinsic merits, our four Gospels were regarded as embodying, in an altogether unique sense, the Teaching of the Apostles respecting the Life, Ministry and sayings of our Lord. They had replaced and superseded the Oral Tradition on which they are based, and were appealed to as Holy Scripture with a conviction that could not have been attained immediately, but must have existed in men's minds for some time previously.

Yet the fact remains that our Gospels were, at the outset, only four among a vast number, and that their unchallenged supremacy was only achieved by degrees.

How did these many gospels arise? Four main reasons may be assigned for their origin:—

(a) A desire to make provision for the day when the living voice of Apostolic eye-witnesses would no longer be heard.

(b) The rapid spread of Christianity, and the urgent need of supplying Gentile Churches with reliable gospel-facts.

(c) The spread of heresy, and the need of combating it.

(d) The natural demand for "Lives of Christ," setting forth Oral Tradition "in order" (that is to say, in orderly chronological sequence), and supplementing early Apostolic Teaching in those portions of our Lord's Life about which it was silent (e.g., the Birth and Infancy of Christ).

It may be well to consider these points a little more in detail.

(a) For a generation after Christ's death, there was no immediate need for written Gospels. The Apostles and other witnesses were alive. Oral Tradition more than sufficed. Trained catechists, under Apostolic superintendence, faithfully taught "the form of sound words," and the living voice was worth more than many books.

But there came a time when the need of written records was keenly felt. The number of eye-witnesses was each year growing less and less. Infirmary or death was rapidly thinning their ranks. How

was the Apostolic Teaching to be preserved unimpaired, when the Apostles were no longer there to superintend and check the teachers?

There was one easy way. Sooner or later, the plan would suggest itself of committing Oral Tradition to writing. This would make for exactitude, and ensure a fixity of tradition. It would also secure a wider diffusion of the Gospel-story.

This method of procedure, we know, went more or less against the Jewish grain, for Oral Tradition was too sacred to commit to writing. The prejudice seems strange to us, but it was keenly felt by Jews. Still, the matter was a serious one and had to be faced.

The Apostles themselves seem to have recognized the urgency of the case, for there is the strongest evidence that, about 50 A.D., the Apostle Matthew composed a collection of "Sayings" of Jesus, in the Hebrew (i.e. Aramaic) tongue. Its Aramaic composition shows that it was meant for Palestinian Jews. This is the first authenticated mention of the adoption of writing as a means of collecting, preserving and circulating the Memoirs of Jesus. This *Gospel of S. Matthew* the Apostle must not be confounded with our *Gospel according to S. Matthew*, written some twenty years later by some unknown Christian Jew.

(b) A more fruitful source of the growth of gospels is to be found in the rapid spread of Christianity outside Palestine, in Asia Minor and Southern

Europe. In Palestine, oral tradition was sacred. But it was not always possible to localize it elsewhere with that sanction of infallible authority which it must have to carry conviction to men's hearts. Tradition was a hardy native Jewish plant; outside Palestine it was an exotic. With Greek Christians, for instance, written gospels were almost an absolute necessity. They did not share the Jewish prejudice in favour of oral tradition. On the contrary, all their sympathies were enlisted on the side of books. Hence, the earliest Gospels were probably written for Gentile use.

But this necessitated another new departure. The Palestinian oral tradition was in Aramaic. Greek was the universal language, and into Greek this Aramaic oral gospel had to be translated. The translation would take time. Our data do not permit us to assume that there was one formal, authorized translation, comprising the whole Gospel-story, and passing directly into the hands of all Greek-speaking Christians, as is done by the Bible Society nowadays. All the evidence points the other way. In all probability, numerous persons, in different places, and at different times, informally translated portions of the Gospel-story, or the whole of it, into Greek.

S. Luke, in his Preface, implies this in so many words. S. Luke, if we may use a modern phrase, "dedicates" his Gospel to Theophilus, a Greek or Roman of high position. In the very first verse of his Preface, he tells us that many before him "have

taken in hand to set forth in order those things which are most surely believed among us." Evidently this refers to "writings," for he straightway adds:—"therefore it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the first . . . even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the Word, . . . to write unto thee, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed (literally, 'catechized')."

Here S. Luke clearly distinguishes between oral tradition and "writings," and insists that these unknown Gospel-writers equally with himself are only trying to embody the Apostolic oral tradition. They wish to add nothing to it, merely to draw it up and arrange it afresh in a connected form. S. Luke speaks of the work of his predecessors as "attempts" (*ἐπεχείρησαν*), but this does not necessarily imply an unfavourable criticism of their narratives. The words "it seemed good *to me also*" indicate that he places himself on the same footing. Equally with them, he bases his narrative on oral tradition, but he considers his "attempt" superior to theirs because he claims a continuous, complete, and exact knowledge of this Apostolic Teaching from the first, and, therefore, he can write "in order."

The fact remains, however, that before S. Luke's day, there had been "many" Gospel-narratives written, and our present canonical Gospels are only

a few among these "many." Several other individuals besides the "most excellent Theophilus," and not a few Gentile Churches, must have equally desired "to know the certainty concerning those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word." They would wish to have a copy of their own, and the number of independent translations must have been great^a.

(c) Perhaps we should rank only second to (b) another prolific cause of the rise of Gospel-narratives, viz. the rapid growth of false doctrine in the early Church, especially among Greek converts.

From the very first, as 1 Cor. i. 12 shows, S. Paul found it hard to keep versatile Greeks in hand. Intellectually alert and fond of speculation (cf. Acts xvii. 21), the Greek claimed freedom of thought as his birthright. He loved new doctrine, asserted his right of private judgment, disliked monotonous uniformity. Thus he was anything but amenable to control. Such a temperament naturally soon evolved countless heresies out of Christianity. They appear only in the germ in S. Paul's Epistles, but he foresaw that this was bound to come; while S. John wrote his Gospel partly as a counterblast to Gnosticism, the child of Greek philosophy wedded to Christianity.

^a In this multiplicity of different versions of the same Oral Tradition, we doubtless have one clue to the multiplicity of various readings in our Gospel-Text.

Heresy is an exaggeration of a partial truth, and as Christianity is many-sided, presenting the Truth from every point of view, it was only too easy for would-be heretics to find a peg in Apostolic Teaching on which to hang their false systems, "wresting the Scriptures to their own and others' destruction." Heresy is not always the outcome of presumption and self-will; often it may be due to a real wish to serve God in a more excellent way. Thus there were good and bad heretics in the early Church, but both the one and the other buttressed their new tenets by the supposed discovery of new aspects of Christian truth which had hitherto strangely escaped others' notice,—so they imagined.

Take the Ebionites, for instance. They were strict Jewish Christians, more or less like the Essenes, very ascetic in spirit. They believed poverty in itself to be a passport to heaven, and riches the highway to perdition. They had not far to seek for a Christian foundation on which to build their creed. The material was ready to hand. Christ Himself distinctly said in His Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are ye poor: woe to you rich." Had He not also startled His disciples with the hard saying: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven"? Did not the parable of Dives and Lazarus, as well as endless passages both in the Old Testament and the New point to the same conclusion?

In the same way, because S. Paul had said that

“faith” was the one thing needful for salvation (Gal. ii. 16), the Antinomians and Nicolaitans seized upon this doctrine, and indulged in fearful excesses. S. Paul had openly stated: “All things are lawful”; he had also given Christians permission to eat meat offered to idols (1 Cor. x. 27). Faith was the one passport to heaven, according to him. On the strength of this, and in defiance of his warnings, these Antinomians lived lives of unrestrained indulgence, frequented heathen idol-feasts and shared in the licentious dissipation that accompanied them. They taught that adultery and fornication were matters of indifference to Christians who have faith in Christ. Of course, this was a travesty of S. Paul’s teaching, but they claimed him as their prophet.

Now it was to combat such false teaching, even in the germ, that many of the early gospels came into existence. They were what we should now call “apologetics,” or writings expressly composed to wean men from wrong views and confirm them in the true faith.

We shall see that heretics produced gospels of their own in support of their peculiar tenets. They adhered so closely to the Apostolic Teaching in the main, merely introducing slight alterations here and there, that even Bishops found it hard to detect the errors in them.

(d) We quoted as a fourth cause of the origin of gospels:—The natural demand for chronological

"Lives of Christ," setting forth the Oral Tradition "in order," and supplementing it in portions where it had been silent in its earliest form.

In dealing with S. Luke's preface in the preceding section, we have said enough for the present on the first clause of this sentence. We shall proceed at once to the second.

We know that the Apostolic Teaching bore testimony to those things of which the Apostles had themselves been eye-witnesses (S. Luke i. 2). Christ had no disciples till after His Baptism (S. Mark i.). In Acts i. 21, 22 there is a very significant piece of corroborative evidence. To take the place of Judas, the Apostles have to select a new Apostle. What is to be his qualification? He must be one "of those which have companied with us *all the time that Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John.*"

Therefore we should naturally infer that oral tradition would "begin from the baptism of John," the first occurrence in our Lord's Life of which the Apostles could speak as eye-witnesses.

Now it is a remarkable fact that in the earliest of our Gospels, S. Mark, this is precisely where the narrative does begin. On this point, the Bishop of Ripon writes: "In the common-stock Gospel, the miraculous accessories connected with the birth of Jesus Christ do not find any place. These accessories are found in the group of secondary witnesses,

i.e. the narrative common to S. Matthew and S. Luke." S. John does not refer to the miraculous Birth either ^b.

In saying this, we do not wish to minimize the miraculous element in the New Testament or to call in question the accuracy of S. Matthew's and S. Luke's versions of the Birth. The Incarnation is a fact, and yet it is the greatest of all miracles. All we wish to imply is that the Apostolic Tradition almost certainly began with the Baptism.

It is noticeable that even S. Matthew and S. Luke give us but the barest account of the period between the infancy and the Baptism of our Lord. But there was evidently, from very early times, a natural desire to know more about these unrecorded portions of our Lord's Life. With the best of intentions and inspired by the highest of motives, there originated in the primitive Church many "gospels of the childhood of Jesus." They contained pious stories told in all good faith to edify and instruct good simple Christians. Often they are little more than a literal interpretation of the poetical word-pictures used by Old Testament prophets in speaking of the coming Messiah (e.g. Isaiah xi.). As S. Matthew (e.g. ii. 15 and 23) shows, primitive Christians read between the lines of prophecy in a way that is passing strange to us. They saw the fulfilment of prophecy in a most

^b No stress can be laid on this fact. S. John omits, e.g. the Temptation, Agony and Transfiguration. Throughout he supplements and transfigures the historic Synoptic Gospel-tradition.

extraordinary manner. Every poetical allusion to Messiah must be literally accomplished in Christ. Zechariah had said: "Behold thy King cometh unto thee sitting upon an ass and a colt the foal of an ass." This, of course, is the Hebrew poetical way of speaking of *one* animal, and so S. Luke and S. Mark interpret it. Not so S. Matthew. In his wish to keep close to the prophecy, he speaks of *two*: "They brought *the ass and the colt*, and set Him *on them*" (ἐπάνω αὐτῶν) (S. Matth. xxi. 7).

It was in this way that many Gospel-stories of our Lord's childhood arose. The best-known *extant* "Gospel of the childhood of Jesus" is the *Protevangelium of James*, to which Zahn assigns the date 100—110 A.D., though most scholars place it later.

By the end of the first century, nay, even earlier, oral tradition had already gathered round its nucleus of solid truth a goodly array of fictitious embellishments. We should be deeply grateful that this solid mass of truth was crystallized in our written Gospels at such an early date as 65—75 A.D.

We should rightly call the majority of these early Gospels "apocryphal," if we are to judge by the greater number of those that have survived. But we are not in a good position to form an impartial opinion, for those that have come down to us are mostly of a comparatively late date, after oral tradition had become more or less legendary and inventive. Of one fact, however, we may be sure, that several of

the earlier Gospels must have been good, for they contested the field with our four canonical Gospels for many a day.

Moreover, we should be careful not to put too heavy a strain on the plausible argument that all the good ones have survived. S. Matthew the Apostle wrote a Gospel, and it is lost,—and, at one period, we were within an ace of losing our S. Mark. It was thought so little of, by the side of the more complete S. Matthew and S. Luke, that there was only one available copy of it left at one time, and this had lost its last leaf.

Even the heretical Gospels were not all without merit. Serapion, bishop of Antioch (191—213 A.D.), a noted divine of the second century, says of one which he has examined: “We have been able to read it through, and we find very many things in full accordance with the true doctrine of our Saviour, but also some things added to that doctrine.”

Our space does not allow us to enter into a detailed account even of those non-canonical Gospels which have survived to our own day. They are too numerous. We shall briefly glance at a few samples.

(1) *The Gospel according to the Hebrews* is a work of considerable value. It is in a fragmentary state as we have it, but the early Fathers knew it intimately

* This was the *Gospel of Peter*; while at Rhossus, Serapion's attention was called to it as a doubtful gospel. Not suspecting its heretical leanings, he authorized it to be read. On further information, he procured a copy with the above result.

and liked it so much that they quote it extensively, almost as if it were Scripture. It is of the Synoptic type. It certainly included the Baptism, Temptation, Lord's Prayer, the healing of the man with the withered hand, the woman taken in adultery, the injunction to forgive until seventy times seven, the Rich young Ruler, the parable of the Pounds, the entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Trial, Peter's denial, our Lord's appearances after the Resurrection, and several sayings of Jesus not recorded elsewhere.

The moral and spiritual teaching of this Gospel bears the clear stamp of the mind of Christ, stress being laid on brotherly love and forgiveness. It exhibits Jesus as the Messiah sent direct from God, the long-expected King of David's race, in Whom prophecy finds its fulfilment. It does not appear to have contained any record of our Lord's miraculous Birth.

It was written in Aramaic, and many eminent scholars believe that it is the original Aramaic Gospel mentioned by Papias as having been written by the Apostle Matthew in that language about 50 A.D. In any case, it is generally acknowledged to be independent of our Synoptic Gospels, and seems to be based on an earlier and even more reliable oral tradition. It is closer to S. Matthew than to the other canonical Gospels.

In the Lord's Prayer one petition runs : " Give us this day our bread for to-morrow." This is interest-

ing and valuable, for no one at the present day can state definitely how this particular clause in S. Matthew is to be translated. He uses a Greek word never employed by anyone else, "epiousion." Lightfoot and several other eminent scholars had already suggested "for to-morrow," "for the coming day," as its real meaning. The Revised Version gives this as an alternative rendering.

The Gospel according to the Hebrews was originally written for Jewish readers. Harnack assigns it a very early date, about 65 A.D., and others place it even earlier. In any case, it is a most important document.

(2) *The Gospel according to the Egyptians* has also reached us in a fragmentary state. Clement of Alexandria held it in high esteem. It was considered heretical by some because, amongst other things, it regards God as essentially One and indivisible. Therefore it represents the Son and the Holy Spirit as identically the same as the Father, only manifestations of Him under another form. It also inculcates celibacy even more strongly than S. Paul (cf. 1 Cor. vii.). Harnack attaches the highest value to this gospel, and a very early date.

(3) *The Gospel of S. Peter*, also fragmentary. In its present form it only covers the period from the trial before Pilate to the visit of the women to the Tomb. It is of this Gospel that Serapion says: "we find many things in full accord-

ance with the true doctrine of our Lord, but also some things added." Justin Martyr (150 A.D.) also quotes it.

In tone, it is anti-Jewish. It also favours the Docetic heresy. The Docetae held, like the Gnostics, that God could neither be born nor die^d. Therefore they made the Godhead descend upon Christ, in the shape of a dove, at His Baptism, and fly back to heaven before the Crucifixion. According to this gospel, the words uttered by Christ on the Cross are: "My Power, My Power, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (*ἡ δύναμις μου, ἡ δύναμις, κατέλειψας με*).

Outside this heretical bias, this gospel is valuable and adds new material to our knowledge, which Harnack considers authentic and drawn from sound tradition. It is a gospel of the Synoptic type. Indeed, some modern scholars believe that it is based on our four Gospels. Harnack assigns it a date between 110—130 A.D., and speaks of it as "of the highest importance."

(4) "*The Sayings of Jesus*." This is another fragmentary gospel discovered at Behnesa, the ancient Oxyrrhynchus, in Central Egypt, in 1897. It consists of "sayings of our Lord" very much on the type of those in the Sermon on the Mount, but differently worded. These "sayings" constitute a very interesting problem in Biblical criticism, which cannot at present be said to have found a satis-

^d The Docetae (*δόκησις*=phantom) also held that the Body of Jesus was only apparent, not real.

factory solution. It is easier to ask "Whence did they originate?" than to supply the answer. We know that our canonical gospels do not nearly include all that our Lord said and did, as the last verse of S. John's Gospel assures us. Consequently the whole of the true oral tradition is not for one moment supposed to be enclosed between the four walls of our Canonical Gospels. It is therefore extremely likely that in the large collection of "sayings" scattered up and down the pages of early Church literature, we have many true "sayings of our Lord" not recorded by our Evangelists. But we have no sure clue yet in hand to enable us to speak on this subject with certainty.

Upon one point, however, there seems to be a general agreement among scholars, viz., that these Oxyrrhynchus "Sayings" belong to a very early date, and preserve early elements of genuine oral tradition of intrinsic value. We know that it was in the form of "Sayings of Jesus" that oral tradition first crystallized, and that there were local varieties of these as of the rest of Apostolic Teaching.

On the subject of these "local varieties" in oral tradition we have already spoken in these pages. But another word of caution is needed. When we come to deal with our four Gospels, we shall find so many unfair inferences drawn from quotations, in early ecclesiastical writers, which resemble passages in our Gospels, that we feel called upon

here to put in a word of warning suggested by these "Sayings of Jesus."

On the strength of a quotation in Clement of Rome, Polycarp or Ignatius, closely resembling a parallel passage in S. Matthew or S. Luke, many scholars at once jump to the conclusion: here is a first-century quotation from our Gospels, therefore they were regarded as Scripture before the end of the first century. As we shall hope to show in our next chapter, this does not follow in the very least. The Apostolic Father in question may have drawn his quotation from any one of half-a-dozen other sources. In all probability he drew it from the only New Testament he recognized, Oral Tradition. Apart from the fact that the Apostolic Father was quoting from memory, there is another probable reason for his quotation being so like yet so different to the parallel passage in our Gospels. It is more than likely that the oral tradition from which he quotes does not originate from the same locality as that of our Evangelists.

S. Paul's Epistles give us a good illustration of this. His version of the words of consecration at the Institution of the Last Supper is like S. Luke's, but totally different from S. Mark's or S. Matthew's. In 1 Tim. vi. 13 (R.V.), again, S. Paul writes: "Christ Jesus, Who before Pilate witnessed the good confession." Now our Lord's answer, "Thou sayest," to Pilate's question: "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" is the only confession named in our Synoptic

Gospels^c, and, important as it is, it hardly satisfies the requirements of S. Paul's solemn phrase. Over and over again do we find that S. Paul's knowledge of the Gospel-story does not tally with the Synoptists in details, though it proceeds on the same lines. In 1 Cor. xv. 4 sqq., S. Paul gives us a list of the appearances of our Lord after His Resurrection. Of the five appearances there mentioned, two, that to James and that to the 500 brethren, are quite new to us. They are not mentioned in *our* Gospels, though the appearance to James is recorded in the "*Gospel according to the Hebrews*."

In precisely the same manner, S. Paul records many sayings which are not worded in the same way as in our Gospels, and some new altogether.

Yet he says, "I delivered unto you that which I also received." We are aware that many will at once remind us that S. Paul did not derive his knowledge from oral tradition at all, or from any human source, but direct from Christ Himself, as he explicitly tells us (Gal. i. 11; 1 Cor. xi. 23), and that therefore our argument breaks down.

But what does S. Paul's statement, "I received from the Lord," really mean? When we read in Acts xiii. 2, "The Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul," or in Acts xvi. 7, "The Spirit of Jesus suffered them not to go into Bithynia," we naturally ask, "How did the Holy Ghost speak?" It is ever best to interpret Scripture by Scripture.

^c In S. John there is a "good confession," but S. John did not write till thirty or forty years after S. Paul wrote this passage.

In Acts xxi, 11, Agabus, a prophet, thus begins his words of warning to S. Paul, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost." This is how the Lord spake to men in S. Paul's day, through His human mouthpieces, the prophets.

Therefore when S. Paul tells us that "he received his gospel of the Lord," he does not mean that his knowledge of the gospel-story came to him without human intervention. All he implies is that he is convinced he derived it from an accredited and thoroughly reliable source. Further, he himself tells us that after his stay in Arabia, he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days^f. It is not necessary to ask what would be the subject of their conversation. In short, whether S. Paul derived his knowledge from "prophet" or "Apostle," or from a written document, directly or indirectly it comes back to the same point. It was based on Apostolic Teaching, and the same thing is true of oral tradition.

Therefore S. Paul proves what these non-canonical gospels suggest, and what has been believed all along, viz. that oral tradition was immensely vaster and contained more materials than our canonical Gospels would lead us to infer. Hence, when these non-canonical gospels supply us with new facts, if they bear the stamp of Christ's Spirit, we are not in a position to assume that they are not

^f This was about 36—38 A.D., and this may account for many of his divergences from the Evangelists. He represents a stage of Oral Tradition far earlier than theirs.

genuine simply because our Gospels do not record them.

Enough, we trust, has been said to prove that, from 50 A.D. onwards, there was a large mass of gospel-narratives of varying value. It took time to sift the chaff from the wheat, and our four Gospels were not at once recognized as inspired, to the exclusion of others. The formation of a Canon of the New Testament was a slower process than we commonly imagine. Not all at once did the early Christian Church perceive what a treasure she possessed in S. Matthew, S. Mark, S. Luke and S. John.

For one reason, the living voice and oral tradition more than replaced books; but there was another cause. In those days, the Old Testament and the Old Testament only, was Holy Scripture. Greatly as the primitive Church revered the Apostles, it took many years before she could look upon the writings of any disciples of the Apostles, or even of the Apostles themselves, as being holy in the same way that the recognized Word of God, the hallowed books of the Old Testament, were sacred. At the time that S. Paul was writing his Epistles, he little thought that one day they would rank with the Law and the Prophets. He probably would have been intensely shocked had any one suggested the bare idea.

In our next chapter we shall endeavour to show when our four Gospels established their claims and were admitted into the Canon of Holy Scripture.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN WERE OUR GOSPELS CANONIZED?

THE question before us in our present chapter is this: When did our Gospels come to be looked upon as sacred books of the Bible, inspired writings worthy of being placed in the Canon of Holy Scripture, side by side with the Old Testament?

Our New Testament books did not leap into their present canonical position at one bound. It was a very gradual process, marked by several stages. We must endeavour to trace these stages, to fix their approximate dates. We must try to ascertain the causes which promoted or retarded the inclusion of these New Testament books in the Canon.

Our previous chapters will at once suggest some answers to these questions. (*a*) *The sacredness of the Old Testament in early Christian days.*

The Christians of the Apostolic Church of Jerusalem were Jews. All Jews so deeply revered "Holy Scripture," held it in such awe, that they jealously viewed the slightest alteration, the least addition to it as a grievous sin. After our Lord's Death, the Old Testament continued to be the one Bible of the Christian Church, and there was no other. For generations, it never even entered their

heads to place Apostolic writings on the same level. It would have been little short of sacrilege in their eyes.

The Apostles themselves had not the least intention of *making* Scripture. They "preached Christ" with the living voice, and it was only under a sort of compulsion that the first Christian *writings* were produced. These were originally of a purely occasional nature—to supplement oral tradition. We have seen this in the case of the Gospels,—so it was with the Epistles. For instance, S. Paul had under his immediate charge a large number of Gentile Churches. He had planted and organized them in the usual way, personally by word of mouth. But, from time to time, during his absence, questions arose in one or other of these Churches requiring his authoritative decision. He therefore issued in writing what we should now call a Bishop's "charge." These were "occasional" documents, not prized nearly as highly as oral tradition. At the moment of their writing, there was not the remotest idea that they would one day form part of the Bible. The prevalent reverence for the Old Testament would banish such a thought; so would the current conviction that the end of the world was imminent. That the New Testament should have been written at all by men who shared these views has been well characterized by Dr. Westcott as a "moral miracle."

(b) *The vitality and sacredness of oral tradition.*

This also stood in the way of new Scriptures. We have so often insisted on this point that it need not detain us here. Books certainly did not supersede it till 120 A.D. at the very earliest.

(c) *The multiplicity of written Gospel-narratives.* It took a very long time before the Church was able to draw a sharp line between Apostolic and non-Apostolic writings, even when it began to lay any stress on literary documents. Readers in those days were surprisingly uncritical. Gospel-versions of greatly varying value were widely scattered, and Christians used such books as were accessible with little discrimination,—as the Serapion extract shows (p. 127 sup.). We shall see that from the end of the first century onwards, passages from Christian writings began to be read in Churches for edification,—somewhat like our “homilies.” This “Church use” conferred a certain dignity on the book in question, and formed a possible stepping-stone to its eventual canonization. In this way, books like the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Epistle of Clement*, and the “*Shepherd of Hermas*” fought hard for inclusion in our New Testament.

Hence it is that, although the books of our New Testament (except 2 S. Peter) were all probably written by 100 A.D., their recognition by the Church as canonical was very much later than this date.

Strange as it may sound, heretics seem to have paved the road for the formation of a New Testa-

ment Canon. So far as we know, the heretic Marcion, about the middle of the second century, led the way.

Marcion detested Jews, and, therefore, their Old Testament. Only in Christ was the true God revealed, not in the Old Testament Jehovah. S. Paul alone had grasped the significance of Christ's Gospel; the older Apostles had misunderstood it. Into his Canon, therefore, Marcion only admitted ten Epistles of S. Paul and one Gospel,—the Pauline Gospel of S. Luke. But he omitted large portions both from Epistles and Gospel so as to still further purify them from Jewish colouring. The fact, however, remains that Marcion is apparently the first to come before us with a collection of Christian writings regarded as Scripture.

Similarly, the Gnostics and other heretics had favourite Gospels (under the names of S. Peter and other Apostles), to which they confidently appealed.

This forced the hands of the Church. It became absolutely necessary to define clearly which Christian writings were orthodox and genuine, which were not. Thus, from about the middle of the second century, we see traces of the formation of a Canon, but it was not till the fourth century that absolute uniformity and agreement on the subject was attained.

We shall now pass in rapid review the evidence on which these conclusions are based.

Evidence may be roughly defined as consisting of facts presented to the mind of a person to enable him to decide a disputed point. Evidence may be direct or indirect, and, in the case of documents, internal or external. Direct evidence is information from persons who were present and saw what happened. Indirect evidence falls short of this, but supplies us with facts from which we can draw an inference as to whether a thing did happen or not. Internal evidence is the testimony borne to the genuineness and authority of a document from within the book itself. External evidence is the witness borne to the genuineness and authority of a document by testimony drawn from outside the document in question.

From the nature of the case, we can derive no information from internal evidence as to the dates when our Gospels were canonized. We must rely entirely on external evidence for our facts in this matter.

Happily for us, the first centuries after Christ produced a rich crop of ecclesiastical Christian writers supplying us with invaluable facts, and on their evidence we are enabled to draw many reliable inferences. But we must remember that much of this evidence is indirect. Extremely valuable so far as it goes, it is not always easy to interpret, and we cannot cross-examine our witnesses as we could wish. Still worse, in the case of one or more of our best witnesses, e.g. Papias,

we only possess their evidence as quoted by Eusebius, writing some 150 years later^a.

Repetitions weary; but the matter is all-important, for the date, and often the authenticity, of our Gospels depends on external evidence. We, therefore, make no apology for repeating certain cautions which should be borne in mind in weighing the evidence supplied by Apostolic and sub-Apostolic literature.

(a) Oral tradition was in full force certainly till 120 A.D. (b) There were many other written Gospels beside our four. (c) Quotations are made mostly from memory in early days. (d) *Gospel* is a general term for the substance of the oral Gospel-story. (e) Authorities^b are not quoted by name till a very late date (e.g. 150 A.D.).

Therefore, (1) when, e.g. Clement of Rome or Justin Martyr quotes a passage which occurs (exactly^c or approximately) in one or more of our Gospels, he need not be referring to our Gospels at all. He may be quoting directly from oral tradition, as is probable, or possibly from some other written Gospel.

(2) The "Gospel says," a phrase constantly re-

^a Eusebius had the books of earlier ecclesiastical writers (now lost) open before him. His quotations from them are invaluable to us, but his comments are of little value. He merely reflects contemporary (265—339 A.D.) opinion, and loves to record anything honourable to the Church.

^b i.e. for the Gospels. S. Paul's Epistles are quoted by name.

^c We have seen that, in Palestine, oral tradition was more or less stereotyped.

currence in these writers, need not and probably does not, till 150 A. D., refer to a written Gospel.

(3) "It is written" always implies that the passage quoted forms part of Holy Scripture. Yet we shall see that the writer of the *Epistle of Barnabas* quotes one passage, at least, as Scripture which is not found in our Bible at all.

On the other hand, the fact that a passage in our Gospels is quoted, but not word for word, is no proof that it is not a direct quotation from our Gospels. These early writers quoted from memory, and laid no stress on verbal exactitude, but aimed only at giving the substance of a passage.

External evidence.

Apostolic Fathers. The ecclesiastical writers of the generation immediately following that of the Apostles are called Apostolic Fathers because they were supposed to be disciples of the Apostles, and their intimate associates. This tradition cannot bear close critical investigation and the name is a misnomer.

They are five in number, Clemens Romanus, Barnabas, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Hermas. Clemens, Barnabas, and Hermas were long believed to be persons actually mentioned by name in the New Testament. This hypothesis breaks down utterly in the case of Barnabas and Hermas, and is questionable even of Clemens. On the other hand, some of them (e.g. Polycarp) had certainly known individual Apostles.

Their writings (80—120 A. D.) breathe a spirit of deep piety, but make no attempt to formulate the truths of Christianity. As a rule, they are as devoid of genius and originality as a modern sermon, but the simple faith and childlike receptivity of these Fathers is very beautiful.

Their chief value to us, here, lies in the close parallelisms with our canonical Gospels, parallelisms that are to be found scattered up and down their writings. Their familiarity with the Gospel-story is evidenced by their frequent allusions to it, yet there is hardly a single passage in their works suggesting the use of a *written* Gospel, though there are direct references to S. Paul's Epistles.

Clement of Rome (Bishop of Rome 93—101 A. D.) wrote an Epistle to the Corinthians in 95-96 A. D., urging them to be more of one mind. He quotes S. Paul 1 Cor. by name. This Clementine epistle contains also three passages often cited as indicating a direct use of our Gospels. Two of these are of questionable value. Thus he tersely blends together the matter of S. Matth. v. 7, vi. 14, vii. 2 and 12; S. Mark iv. 24 and xi. 25; S. Luke vi. 31, 36, 37, 38 into one compact expression bidding the Corinthians pity that they may be pitied, forgive that they may be forgiven, &c. Dr. Sanday infers that the "roundness, compactness, and balance of style" in this passage, and a similar one later on, make it probable that Clement was quoting our Gospels. Other scholars advance precisely the same reason for alleging that it is oral tradition crystallized.

What is more to the point is that in S. Matth. xv. 8 and S. Mark vii. 6 occurs a quotation from Isaiah *very much shortened*: "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me," and Clement reproduces it exactly *in its shortened form*^d.

Clement also quotes some "sayings" of our Lord not found in our Gospels.

Ignatius (Bishop of Antioch 109—116 A.D.^e, whose seven shorter letters are now admitted to be genuine, has several parallelisms with our Gospels and remarkable coincidences of thought, but this is all. It is noteworthy that the only words of our Lord expressly quoted by Ignatius are words not found in any of our Gospels: "And when He came to those about Peter, He said, Take, handle Me, and see that I am not a bodiless demon" (cf. S. Luke xxiv. 39). Origen tells us these words occur in the "*Preaching of Peter*"; Jerome, in the "*Gospel according to the Hebrews*."

Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (who lived between 70—155 A.D.^f), wrote a letter to the Philippians. He quotes a passage very similar to the compact expression of Clement mentioned above: "Remem-

^d We must, however, remember that Oral Tradition contained a collection of Old Test. "proof-texts" as well as of our Lord's "Sayings." "To collect and apply the Oracles of the O.T. in the light of the New Dispensation was the first literary task of the Christian Church. Several such collections survive." *Burkitt, Transmission of the Gospel-Story*, p. 127 sq.

^e Zahn and Lightfoot have established the genuineness of the seven Ignatian Epistles, but throw back their date to 110—130 A.D.

^f The exact date of Polycarp's martyrdom (at age of 86) is not known. It is generally fixed at Feb. 23, 155 A.D.

bering the things which the Lord said while teaching, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged, remit that it may be remitted unto you,' &c. He likewise has a passage *identical* with S. Matth. xxvi. 41 and S. Mark xiv. 38: "Asking the all-beholding God not to lead us into temptation, even as the Lord said, '*the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*'"

Barnabas is really not an Apostolic Father at all. Harnack and others prove his date to be nearer 130 A.D. than 100 A.D. His Epistle gives us the first reference (if we except the reference in the spurious 2 Pct. iii. 16) to any book of the New Testament as "Scripture." "Let us beware lest we are found, as *it is written*, '*many called, but few chosen*'" (cf. S. Matth. xxii. 14). But he also quotes as Scripture passages which are nowhere in our Bible. "The Scripture saith, And it shall come to pass in the last days that the Lord will deliver up the sheep of His pasture, and their sheepfold and tower to destruction. And it so happened as the Lord had spoken." Similarly, the only words he expressly assigns to Jesus are not found in our Gospels: "Even so, saith He, they that would see Me and touch My kingdom, must take Me, through persecution and suffering."

Hermas, the Shepherd of, was the most popular religious book in the early Church, somewhat like our "Pilgrim's Progress." Indeed, the *Pastor of Hermas*, as well as the Epp. of Clement, of Barnabas

and of Polycarp are all quoted as Scripture during the second century, and were publicly read in the Churches. The *Shepherd of Hermas* (100—140 A.D.) contains no distinct traces of the writings either of the Old or New Testament. The nature of its subject does not well admit of quotations.

To sum up. In the Apostolic Fathers, S. Paul's Epistles are quoted by name, but our Gospels never. Once only, in the latest of these writers, Barnabas, a passage occurring in one of our Gospels, "many are called, but few are chosen," is cited as Scripture. Clement quotes, without acknowledgment, one passage found in Matthew, so does Polycarp. There are scores of close parallelisms with New Testament books. On the other hand, many passages are quoted as Scripture, and sayings of Jesus cited, which occur nowhere in our Bible.

In weighing the evidence, remembering our cautions, the only inferences which the evidence before us allows us to draw are these: (1) Some of these writers may have been acquainted with our S. Matthew and S. Mark, but (2) Oral tradition may equally cover all their quotations. They consist of short pithy sayings, which would stamp themselves indelibly on men's hearts. (3) These Fathers were also familiar with other gospel-sources not known to us. (4) Our Gospels had not yet established their claim and superseded others. (5) At the same time, the general tendency of that day

to care more for the *substance* than the *letter*, to quote from memory, and combine several passages into one, *may* veil many direct quotations from our Gospels.

The *Didache*, or "Teaching of the XII. Apostles." This is a document of such supreme importance that we give a very brief analysis of it in the Appendix.

There is absolutely nothing in the *Didache* (70—100 A.D.) which can be cited as a quotation from our Gospels. The words "as ye have it in the gospel of our Lord" have been quoted as referring to one of our written Gospels. They prove nothing. This phrase in earliest Christian literature is a constant formula for "as our Lord said to His disciples." There are in the *Didache* the usual parallelisms and coincidences of thought, but that is all.

Sub-Apostolic writers up to 150 A.D.

Papias (70?—156?) was Bishop of Hierapolis in the early second century. He wrote his "Expositions of the 'sayings,' 'oracles' or 'scriptures' of the Lord" about 130—140 A.D. By reason of the intrinsic value of his evidence special interest is attached to his words by scholars of every school of Bible criticism. There has been more wrangling over his words than over any other statements in connection with the Gospel-evidence, for a very great deal hangs on their interpretation.

He begins by telling us that he has collected his

evidence at first hand, obtaining it from those who were disciples of the Apostles. *"I shall not scruple to place side by side with my expositions all the things (solemnly affirming their truthfulness) that I ever rightly learned from the Elders and rightly remembered."*

He then goes on to tell us that he was indifferent to idle gossip and hearsay, seeking only for direct evidences as to the words of Christ, and he continues:—*"If, at any time, anyone came who had been acquainted with the Elders, I used to enquire about the discourses of the Elders, what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Thomas or James, or what John or Mattheu, or any of the disciples of the Lord; and what Aristion and John the Elder, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I thought that information derived from books would not be so profitable to me, as that derived from a living and abiding utterance."*

He then quotes the following words on the authority of an Elder in whom he placed implicit trust: *"And this Elder used to say that Mark, indeed, having been Peter's interpreter, wrote down with accuracy, yet not in order, everything he bore in mind,—the things, namely, either said or done by Christ. For neither did Mark himself listen to the Lord or follow Him, but later on, as I have said, Mark followed Peter, who gave him all such instruction as was required, yet without intending to make a connected account of our Lord's sayings. Accordingly, Mark was no way in fault in so writing certain*

things as he recalled them. For of one thing he took precaution, not to omit anything that he had heard, or therein to state it falsely."

Papias is also our authority for the statement: "*Matthew, then, for his part, compiled the sayings in Hebrew: but each man interpreted them as he was able.*"

Our Papias' quotations reach us through Irenæus and Eusebius. Irenæus (180 A.D.) speaks of him as a "hearer of John," a companion of Polycarp, and "a man of the old time," that is, a man of the primitive days of Christianity.

Papias wanted to get at the fountain-head, to obtain first-hand evidence of the facts of the Gospel-story. There were scores of so-called gospels floating about. Some contained erroneous details and contradictory matter such as would create much confusion and uncertainty in the minds of contemporary Christians. Papias felt that he would be rendering a service to the Church if he collected from eye-witnesses all the authentic information still available, so he brings to a focus the last glimmerings of direct Apostolic tradition.

His evidence has, indeed, proved invaluable, but his mention of two Johns,—John and John the Elder—has made confusion worse confounded. Eusebius (300 A.D.), Papias' reporter, makes out that there were two Johns, and that their two tombs existed in Ephesus to his own day. He further implies that it was "John the Elder" who wrote the Apocalypse,

and modern critics have made free use of this statement in support of their theory that the Fourth Gospel is not by John the Apostle.

We shall have to return to this large question in dealing with S. John's Gospel. For the present, it is more to our purpose to note that Papias, writing in 130—140 A.D., (1) was familiar with S. Mark's Gospel, (2) also with a S. Matthew's Gospel "in Hebrew," (3) and a number of "interpretations" or gospel-narratives based on it.

Eusebius adds, "Papias also quotes the former Epistle of John and that of Peter likewise. He has also set forth a narrative concerning a woman charged before the Lord with many sins, which the Gospel according to the Hebrews contains."

We are not to infer from Papias' silence about S. Luke and S. John that he did not know of their existence—simply that "he had nothing to say about them" (Lightfoot). He seems to have had no conception of canonical authority attaching to any part of what we now call the New Testament.

Justin Martyr, the ablest Christian of his generation, and an Apologist of note. Tatian calls him "The most wonderful Justin." He wrote about 150 A.D. In his works he speaks of the narratives of our Lord's Life and Ministry, which he has consulted, as "memoirs of the Apostles."

In these early days we seldom hear of "the gospels." Even when the four gospels had fully established their claim to canonicity, they are still

grouped together as if they formed one document, and spoken of in the singular as "the gospel."

Justin is the first, in one passage of his *Apology* (possibly a gloss), to use the plural form "gospels"; but as a rule he speaks of "The memoirs composed by the Apostles and those who followed them," a phrase, by the way, which exactly describes our four Evangelists.

In five places where he introduces a quotation with the formula "it is written," he agrees with S. Matthew and S. Luke almost word for word. Indeed, in Justin, for the first time, the direct quotations from our Gospels can be counted by scores. They are not verbally exact, but they can no longer be called mere parallelisms, though Justin is nothing if not an inexact quoter, and combines passages drawn now from one, now from another of the Synoptic Gospels. He hardly seems to refer to S. John, but this is a moot question. At any rate, he makes much more sparing use of the Fourth Gospel than of the Synoptists.

Justin still makes free use of what we should now call "apocryphal" gospels. Harnack and Sanday believe he largely used the "Gospel of Peter"; Swete denies it. He certainly weaves in traits which he has derived from gospel-narratives unknown to us. S. Paul's Epistles are never mentioned. The Apocalypse, 1 Peter and 1 John he esteems highly. Hebrews and the Acts he ignores. Evidently Justin had no sympathies with Paulinism

and attached his belief to the teaching of the older Apostles.

Justin is on the threshold of a Canon of the New Testament, but no absolute sanctity is as yet attached to the respective books. In his day none of the Gospels had yet been canonized. Justin, like the Church of his day, set a special value on certain Christian writings publicly read in the churches, but we know that this public reading does not imply canonicity, for non-canonical books were so read.

In Justin's "Memoirs of the Apostles" it is all but certain that we have S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke, possibly S. John. At the same time, oral tradition is still in force, the Gospels are not yet canonized, and Justin still gleans freely from apocryphal Gospels.

Marcion—see above, p. 139.

Tatian composed (172—173 A.D.) a harmony of the Gospels. This is the first emphatic indication that our four Gospels have established their claims and are accepted as of unique authority, to the exclusion of others. The value of Tatian's evidence is enhanced by the fact that he uses the Fourth Gospel as much as the other three. He begins his book with S. John's Prologue: "In the beginning was the Word," &c.

Shortly after this date, we have the clearest indication to the canonicity of our four Gospels in the *Muratorian Canon* (175—200 A.D.). This contains

the first formal list we possess of New Testament Books by name. It includes (in this order) S. Matthew, S. Mark, S. Luke, S. John, Acts, xiii Epistles of S. Paul, 1, 2 S. John, S. Jude, Apocalypse, the Apocalypse of *Peter*, the Epistle to the Laodiceans, and the Epistle to the Alexandrians.

Now our Gospels cannot thus have leapt at one bound into unquestionable canonicity at the date of Tatian and the Muratorian Fragment. They must have occupied this position for at least a generation previously, in spite of the paucity of evidence to this effect.

Irenæus (Bishop of Lyons, 180 A.D.), a famous theologian; *Theophilus*, Bishop of Antioch, 180 A.D.; *Tertullian*, *Clement of Alexandria*, and *Hippolytus* (all about 200 A.D.) speak of the canonicity of our four Gospels as established beyond dispute. Irenæus is so convinced that there are, and can be, but four canonical Gospels that he adduces a strange reason for their particular number: "There are four chief winds, therefore four Gospels."

No evidence after 200 A.D. need be called. It is superfluous. We wish, however, to mention here two later ecclesiastical writers of note to whom we shall often have to refer:—

Origen (185—254 A.D.) is one of the most eminent men of his day as a writer, philosopher, and apologist. He has been called "the father of Bible criticism and of exegesis in Christendom."

Eusebius (265—339 A.D.), a most careful and

deeply-learned Church historian. His "Ecclesiastical History" contains skilfully selected quotations from some fifty different authorities. His evidence is specially valuable because he had access to authorities and materials of first-rate importance which would have been quite lost to us had he not utilized them just when he did.

Recapitulation.

(a) The Apostolic Fathers afford us little more than parallelisms with our Gospels. Papias (130—140 A.D.) is familiar with S. Mark, and speaks of an Aramaic Gospel by S. Matthew the Apostle. Marcion (140 A.D. mutilated S. Luke and based his Gospel on our third Evangelist. Justin's "Memoirs of the Apostles" (150 A.D.) seem to be identical with our Synoptists.

(b) Up to 150 A.D. our Gospels had not been canonized, oral tradition was still in force, though rapidly on the wane, and apocryphal gospels were freely used.

(c) Tatian's "Harmony of the Gospels" (173 A.D.) is a land-mark showing that our four Gospels are now accepted as unique, and others rejected.

The Muratorian Canon and Irenæus (180 A.D.) prove that our four Gospels are canonized and on a level with the Old Testament, in their day.

(d) Church-reading seems to have been a factor in canonization, but "apostolicity" was apparently the final test.

(e) The formula "it is written" is first used of Gospels by the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas*. The general term "Gospel" is also in vogue till Justin Martyr, the first to use "Gospels." Not till Papias do we hear of any of our Gospels *by name*, and he only refers to our S. Mark. Irenæus is the first to name all four, and also the first to make use of the term "New Testament," in our sense of the word.

(f) The Muratorian Canon is the first formal orthodox list of New Testament books. In Athanasius' Canon (365—370 A.D.) we meet for the first time with a list of New Testament books identically the same as our own. This Athanasian Canon was confirmed by the third Council of Carthage (397 A.D.), though the Eastern Church still refused to accept it. In 692 A.D. East and West combined and confirmed the decision of the Council of Carthage.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TEXT OF OUR NEW TESTAMENT.

THE Higher Criticism is so called because it deals with questions "higher" than those of the mere Text of the Bible, and, strictly speaking, Textual Criticism does not enter within our province. With Francisco, we say, "For this relief much thanks." The Textual Criticism of the New Testament Scriptures, in spite of the years of devoted labour bestowed upon it, is a study still in its infancy. The very principles on which it is based are still imperfectly understood, and it is an open question whether its true foundations have yet been at all adequately laid. The leading textual critics of one school flatly and contemptuously contradict the conclusions and methods adopted by the champions of another school, and the subject is still treated rather after the fashion of a polemical controversy than of a purely critical investigation. The state of things is so bewildering that it is exceedingly difficult for the student who is not a specialist in this branch to grasp or convey a clear idea of the results achieved. Yet the subject embraces such a wide province, and is in itself of such absorbing interest,

that some attempt must be made to define its scope and some of the conclusions to which it seems to point.

There are still a considerable number of Bible-readers who fancy that the text of our New Testament represents the exact words used by its original authors. Till comparatively recent times, even scholars were of this opinion. Erasmus, and still later, the Elzevir publishers, in their editions of the Greek Testament, felt so confident of the absolute accuracy of their versions that they openly called their publications "the original Greek text, in all its purity, correctness, and integrity."

We can no longer dream these dreams. The original text of our New Testament is hopelessly lost. There is hardly a passage about which there is not some slight doubt as to the exact wording. If we wished to place the matter in a startling light and unsettle our readers, we might put it in this way. The New Testament consists of 7,959 verses. In 1892, there were said to be more than 150,000 various readings, or an average of twenty variations for each verse.

Such a statement would be literally true, but absolutely misleading, and for this reason: the most minute and trifling details all reckon as variations. Take, for instance, the last verse of our Bible:

(*a*) The grace of *the* Lord Jesus be with you all.
Amen.

(*b*) The grace of *our* Lord Jesus be with you all.
Amen.

(*c*) The grace of the Lord Jesus *Christ* be with you all. Amen.

(*d*) The grace of *Christ* be with you all. Amen.

(*e*) The grace Amen. Amen.

(*f*) The grace *us* all. Amen.

(*g*) The grace with *all*. Amen.

(*h*) The grace with *all men*.
Amen.

(*i*) The grace with *the saints*.
Amen.

(*j*) The grace with *all the saints*.
Amen.

&c., &c., &c.

Every single one of these minute variants counts, and, as we may imagine, the total soon mounts up.

With few exceptions, the variants do not affect the sense of the passage in the least, even when the words differ more materially, e.g. S. Matth. xxiv. 31, "with a great sound of a trumpet," "with a great trumpet."

It is in proper names that serious variations often occur. Thus in Matth. x. 3, the name of the tenth Apostle is variously given as (*a*) Thaddæus, (*b*) Leb-bæus, (*c*) Thaddæus who was called Lebbæus, (*d*) Lebbæus who was called Thaddæus, (*e*) Judas Zelotes, (*f*) Judas, the son of James, (*g*) Judas, who was called Thaddæus, who was called Lebbæus, (*h*) Thad-dæus Zelotes.

At times, the variation in the readings does make a sensible difference in the meaning, e.g. :—

S. Matth. xix. 17 (R.V.): (a) “Why askest thou Me concerning that which is good? One there is Who is good.”

(b) “Why callest thou Me good? None is good save One, even God” (cf. S. Mark x. 18).

A glance at the margin of our Revised Version will supply hundreds of these variants, and we need not multiply them here.

There is another striking fact to be noted. In our New Testament pages occur passages here and there which are now generally admitted to be interpolations. Thus, in the margin of our Revised Version, we find notes of this nature :—

(a) S. John viii. 1—11 (“story of the woman taken in adultery”): “Most of the ancient authorities omit S. John vii. 53—viii. 11. Those which contain it vary much from each other.”

(b) S. Mark xvi. 9—20: “The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from verse 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel.”

(c) S. Matth. vi. 13; the Revised Version omits “For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen,” but states in the margin: “Many authorities, some ancient, but with variations, add ‘For Thine is the kingdom,’” &c.

This may tempt some readers to say in their haste:

Then, what becomes of Inspiration? If there are these interpolations, as well as 150,000 various readings, some of considerable importance, in our various versions of the New Testament, where is the correct or inspired wording to be found in them all? The whole idea of Inspiration goes overboard in this bewildering maze of uncertainty.

Nothing of the kind! The theory of *verbal* Inspiration goes overboard. This is precisely what we should expect from that Holy Spirit which assures us that "the letter killeth, it is the spirit which giveth life."

Had the variations been largely, instead of very rarely, of a nature to alter the sense or the spirit of a passage, then our confidence in the Inspiration of the disputed passages might be affected. But what do we actually find? In ninety-nine out of a hundred cases, the sole difference created by these variants is purely verbal, and not of the slightest account to the sense. Knowing, as we do, that our Lord and His Apostles discouraged the worship of the letter, though they were most careful of the substance of their message, it would be straining at a gnat to question the Inspiration of our New Testament on such absolutely trivial grounds.

We may go even further. If the slight verbal inaccuracies of our present text teach us to build on the general sense and not on the mere letter of Scripture, what result can be happier? It is a practical and salutary lesson which we sadly want

to learn nowadays, and if these verbal discrepancies can only wean us from this extreme form of Bibliolatry, the outcome of our 150,000 variants will indeed be blessed and providential.

We may also look at the matter in another light which is very suggestive and reassuring. Will any one venture to assert that for the last 1,500 years our New Testament has lost its power to comfort, strengthen or inspire men, to draw them nearer to God; in a word, to do all that fully inspired Holy Scripture should do? Yet our text is substantially the same now as in 400 A.D., Chrysostom's day. Dr. Hort assures us as an incontrovertible fact that the worst corruptions to which the New Testament has ever been subjected originated within a hundred years after it was composed. Irenæus, in 180 A.D. complains that in his day the text is hopelessly corrupt, so does Origen some years later.

If we had been living in 400 A.D., the problem of various readings would in all essential points have been the same as it is now. Indeed, we are in a far more favourable position than was S. Chrysostom. In such excellent manuscripts as Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, we possess a far purer text than any within his reach. His collection of manuscripts generally was limited, and derived from few sources, while we have access to thousands upon thousands representing the various texts in use at Antioch, Jerusalem, Rome, Alexandria and elsewhere.

Yet, admittedly imperfect as was the Received

Text in 400 A.D., it has been through it that the Holy Spirit has blessed and fed the Church of Christ for 1,500 years. During all these centuries, the New Testament, in spite of its verbal inaccuracies, has been man's spiritual guide and has divinely influenced his life. Imperfect, then, as our Text may be, it bears the true impress of the seal of the Holy Spirit. It conveys its divine message to our hearts with a power which can come from none other than God Himself speaking in its words. If we examine the letter of our New Testament through a critic's microscope, we may perhaps be bewildered, just as we should be if we did the same thing with the water we drink, or the food we eat to our comfort and sustenance.

There is another consideration which should not be lost sight of. There are about 6,000 MSS. of the New Testament. Each of these contributes its full share towards the 150,000 variants. In fact, the later the MS. the more numerous the various readings it contains. Each copy naturally perpetuates the verbal errors of its original, and adds more of its own.

But Westcott and Hort have also convincingly shown that three-quarters, if not more, of these 6,000 MSS. sprang from four main original sources. They are mere copies, echoes of these four originals. Therefore, when we speak of 6,000 MSS., imposing as the number sounds, the bare figures mean very little. Like the signatures to a petition, it is only

the 6 that counts, and the 000 after it are almost a negligible quantity.

However numerous the progeny of an original manuscript may be, their united value can never be greater than that of their common parent. This, of course, does not mean that all our extant MSS. can be traced back to four or six actually existing autograph manuscripts. All that is implied is that MSS., like men, naturally fall into groups or families.

One set of MSS. is clearly of Alexandrian origin, another set comes from an Antioch source, and so forth. Each group has a marked family likeness, with pronounced features all its own, and a close examination of a MS. soon reveals whether its text has been cast in a Roman or Alexandrian mould.

It may be asked: How has it come about that such important documents as the originals of our New Testament books are lost? Even then, how is it that all copies from these originals are not as verbally exact as are the copies of an author's books nowadays?

The answer is not far to seek. The original New Testament books, as they left the hands of a S. Luke or a S. Paul, were written on papyrus, or paper made from the pith of a tall reed. This writing-material was very perishable. Some *papyri* have reached us; but these were mostly found in tombs or other places where they had not been much in use, whereas our

Gospels would of necessity have been constantly handled.

The ink used was lampblack, mixed with gum, dissolved in water. The pens were reeds. The writing was altogether in capitals for *uncials*, without division of words, punctuation, or marks of any kind, and the words were often abridged.

In the fourth century, parchment or vellum again came into use, and the oldest MSS. of the Bible we possess are two of these fourth-century parchment writings. But parchment was scarce and dear, so the original manuscript was often rubbed out by monks and others, and something else written in its place. Many valuable Bible MSS. were thus sacrificed to perpetuate some miserable theological composition instead. Fortunately, by means of chemicals, it is possible to restore the original writing, and thus has been recovered the very valuable fifth-century Codex Ephraemi. These doubly-written MSS. are technically called "palimpsests."

In course of time, capitals were replaced by a *cursive* or running hand in ordinary small letters, and with the words more or less divided. Our earliest extant dated cursive MS. is of 835 A.D.

In the fifth century, Euthalius began the system of dividing the Bible into chapters, but there was no uniformity in this matter. Our present Bible-chapters are the work of Stephen Langton (thirteenth century), and Robt. Stephens introduced our verse-divisions in 1551.

If we are to judge from existing first-century MSS., our Gospels left their authors' hands written in capital letters, without any word-divisions, and with words often abridged, after this style, INT̄BGNGWAST̄WD ("In the beginning was the word"). Every new book had to be copied from the original by hand. It requires little thought or experience to show how easily errors would creep into the text.

It must also be borne in mind that, as we have seen, the earliest New Testament writings were occasional productions, written just to meet the requirements of the moment. The Apostles and their disciples, at the moment of writing, had no idea that they were *making* Scripture or even writing autographs which Christians, twenty centuries later, would give half a kingdom to possess.

Similarly, the copyists of their works, copying them for private use, or for some friends or local churches, were not as careful as we could have wished. Of course, writing about their Lord and their God, they did their work conscientiously, but not as if they had been conscious that they were writing for all ages.

There were, we know, in those days, regular professional publishers and copyists of literary works. The *Sosii* at Rome were doing this work in S. Paul's day. They could turn out a book in graceful and enduring form, and as accurately as we do. But Christians would not employ such men for their

writings. At this period, Christ's followers were suspected as a dangerous and hateful sect. So much so that S. John in his Apocalypse, and S. Peter in his Epistle, veil their allusions to Rome in terms of studied enigma. Therefore Christian writings would be copied by Christians, unprofessional writers, who did their work reverently, we may be sure, yet not with the perfect accuracy of an expert.

Even in these days of printing, misprints are not by any means infrequent, and when books were each copied one by one by hand, for local use, by unskilled persons, the wonder is that the text has safely survived at all.

Slips in copying would naturally arise in various ways. There would be slips of the eye, the ear, the memory,—for copying was often done from dictation. Literary piety, as we have so often said, was not a virtue in those days, and a transcriber would occasionally omit what he considered trifling details. Or, if he were a learned man, corrections would be made in grammar or style, slight changes adopted to make a S. Mark conform more closely to a S. Matthew, or even to render the meaning of a passage clearer. Quotations from the Old Testament would be made more exact or complete. Moreover, it was a common practice to add marginal notes or glosses, and these often came to be embodied in the text by a later copyist.

All this was done in perfect good faith, simply

because transcribers seldom aimed in those days at that minute accuracy which is expected of a modern critical editor. Their conscientiousness in other respects is clear from the fact that there is an almost complete absence of any deliberate alteration of the text to suit peculiar theological views.

We must also remember that till 150 A.D., certainly, there was no New Testament Canon. A complete New Testament would not have been found anywhere, probably, till after the middle of the second century. No one, before Marcion, seems to have formed a collection of the Pauline Epistles. The colour of theology varied in the Churches East and West. Some Churches would treasure one set of writings, others another. S. Paul's Epistles, and S. Luke's Gentile Gospel would specially appeal to the Gentiles for whom they were written, but hardly at all to Palestinian Jews. These had their S. Matthew, S. James, and S. Peter. Hence portions of our New Testament found a home in one locality, other portions in another, but a complete New Testament would be practically unknown till 150 A.D.

In other words, from the very first, there was a Jerusalem "use," an Antioch "use," an Alexandrian "use," a Roman "use." The portions of the New Testament which each possessed would be the standard books in that locality. These would be copied over and over again, and find their way from the mother-Church to newly-formed communities all around it. Naturally, a general similarity of text

prevailed in groups of copies thus locally associated. In this way we are able to speak of an Alexandrian, a Western, and a Syriac text.

But, even in ancient times, no local text could long remain uninfluenced by copies from other regions. As the Church grew more and more compact and united, the comparison of copies would become more and more extended in range. Old readings, which had struck deep root in certain localities, were not eradicated, in all likelihood. In religion, then as now, men are all conservatives by nature. But it became now almost impossible for any important new variation to escape detection. Hence it is that since the fourth century no variants of any consequence have crept into the text.

We shall conclude this chapter with a rough epitome of Textual Criticism conclusions generally accepted at the present day, taking Westcott and Hort as our authorities.

Our own Authorised Version of the New Testament is based on a Greek Text which was used by Chrysostom and Syriac Churches generally, from the fourth century onwards. So acceptable was it to Christendom at large, until modern criticism called its accuracy into question, that it still goes by the name given it in the Elzevir edition of 1633, *Textus Receptus* (TR), the "received text" or "acknowledged text."

Simultaneously, there has always existed a text

technically known as the "Western" use, though the term is not strictly applicable in a geographical sense. It is so called from the fact that the Churches of the West read the Gospels in the Latin translation of Jerome (384 A.D.). This is based on a Greek text substantially different from the "Received Text."

There is also an Alexandrian "use" which, so far as we can judge, is exclusively confined to Alexandrian Churches.

Finally, there is a fourth group called *Neutral* because it is a comparatively pure text, free from the distinctive and faulty readings of the other groups, even though it may have peculiar errors of its own. Under this group are placed the two famous fourth-century MSS., Codex Sinaiticus (Σ) and Codex Vaticanus (B)^a. Their text of the Gospels in particular is supposed to be very pure.

Which of these four groups are we mainly to trust? Over this question a battle-royal is still being fought between the two great rival schools, the Burgon-Miller and Westcott-Hort camps.

The late Dean Burgon was the recognized champion of the school which pins its faith to the "Received Text" that underlies our Authorized Version. Burgon and his followers even go so far as to say that "faith in the Inspiration of Scripture carries with it, as a corollary, faith in a special Providence watching over the transmission of the Text; and

^a B is purely neutral, Σ is "mixed," but its Gospels are largely neutral.

the authority of the Church which gave us these books guarantees the text of these holy books as well."

This *ex cathedrâ* pronouncement overlooks the fact that another large and enlightened portion of the Catholic Church read the Scriptures from 384 A.D. onwards in Jerome's text, and equally regarded it as the one and only true inspired Text.

Dogmatic assertion is no proof, and much as we may honour Dean Burgon's spirit of reverence, his theories can hardly be cited as evidence based on verified facts. Westcott and Hort, on the other hand, have laboriously collated and weighed practically every iota of available evidence that can be brought forward on either side, and we may accept the matured conclusions of two such experts with some confidence.

Their estimate of the four groups is as follows:—

(a) The *Textus Receptus* is not an original text. It is a revision which deliberately introduced corrections, and interpolated passages that found no place in the original text on which TR is based. S. John viii. 1—11, S. Mark xvi. 9—20, S. Matth. vi. 13b^b are instances of such interpolations, though Westcott and Hort admit that these new passages may be derived from some other trustworthy source.

(b) The *Alexandrian Text* shows a tendency to very slight paraphrase, and betrays signs of skilful

^b "For thine is the kingdom, &c."

assimilation and a careful attention to language, but there are no interpolations.

(*c*) The *Western Text* has two chief characteristics, boldness of paraphrase and a readiness to adopt extraneous matter.

(*d*) The *Neutral* is a comparatively pure text.

Here we leave this knotty subject. Westcott and Hort's conclusions are, after all, only very probable. The Burgon-Millerites flatly contradict them; Salmon calls (*b*) and (*c*) one group (Alexandrian); others support the Western "use." The whole matter seems a Gordian knot and apple of discord combined, likely to remain a cause of endless strife, unless some first-century manuscript turns up to settle it.

CHAPTER X.

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE.

DR. CHARLES truly says: "No attempt to study Christianity in its origins can dispense with a knowledge of Apocalyptic literature. If we wish to reconstruct the world of ideas and aspirations which filled the heart of an earnest Jew at the beginning of the Christian era, it is to this literature that we must have recourse for our materials."

Strictly speaking, this chapter does not logically belong to this section (Part II.) of our book, a section which deals with the history of Gospel literature pure and simple. But we shall so often have occasion to refer to Apocalyptic literature in the succeeding chapters that we feel constrained to give it a place here.

Apocryphal and Apocalyptic literature of the two centuries before Christ.

The New Testament is the flower of which the Old Testament is the seed and growing plant. Separate them we cannot, for they are essentially one and the same, an organic whole. "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets," says our Lord, "I am come, not to destroy, but to fulfil."

Yet, intimate as is the relationship between the older and newer revelations, there is also a striking contrast between the two. It is as though one met an intimate friend of former days after a twenty years' interval fraught to him with experiences of far-reaching significance. It has been the critical period of his life and character. He is the same, yet so altered,—improved in tone, developed in moral and mental fibre. Physically and morally, he has grown almost past recognition. Great possibilities in him there always were, they are now actual realities.

This is the kind of feeling we experience as we turn from the Old Testament to the New. It is the same old friend, the same voice, yet so different.

How are we to account for it all? We can do so in one of two ways,—or, rather, in both. First and foremost, as with every epoch-making movement, the new environment is itself due to a great Personality, Jesus, "The Word made Flesh." This explains almost everything.

But there is also another factor of which we cannot afford to lose sight. Between the last book of the Old Testament and the Birth of Christ comes an interval of 160 years, a period of immense importance in the history of the Jews. Of its historical significance we shall speak hereafter; what chiefly concerns us here is the intrinsically valuable religious literature it produced,—the Apocrypha.

We have unduly belittled the Apocrypha and

allowed it to fall into oblivion, yet it has played a most important rôle in moulding Christian thought and character. Up to the time of the Reformation, the Apocryphal books formed an integral part of the Christian Bible, and portions of it are read in our Church to-day. The writers of the New Testament often quote it, and are very familiar with it. The line which separates some of the Apocryphal books from the Canon of Holy Scripture is very thin and faint, hard to define. Indeed, on purely spiritual grounds, many Christians feel that the Apocryphal books of Sirach and Wisdom might profitably replace either Ecclesiastes, Esther, or Canticles.

But, waiving all question of its spiritual value, and turning to what is more to our present purpose, the Apocrypha is of supreme importance to us from a religious history point of view. Dr. Sanday truly says that the close study of its literature during the last twenty years has revolutionized New Testament criticism. All of a sudden our eyes have been opened to the fact that the imaginary gap between the Old Testament and the New is of our own making. It is not there. God's Revelation of Himself did not end with Ezra or Daniel. He was not thus silent for four hundred, three hundred, or even one hundred and fifty years. The two centuries immediately preceding Christ's Advent are not the mere blank we supposed. Is it likely that God should have left Himself without a witness to His people on the very eve of the Advent of Messiah? As a matter of fact,

it was precisely this period which most effectually paved and prepared the way for our Lord's Coming. The Chosen People then passed through a political and religious crisis which made the age ready and ripe for Christ's appearance, and deeply affected the life and thought of the infant Christian Church.

The Apocrypha consists of fourteen books, and forms a small library in itself. The general name Apocrypha is commonly given to the whole series, but, strictly speaking, it subdivides into two parts (1) the Apocrypha proper, (2) Apocalyptic writings.

The Apocrypha proper deals with the history and the moral and religious education of the Jews during this period. It is of a much more sober character than the Apocalyptic literature. The Apocalypses, on the other hand, mainly consist of prophetic visions into the future, which strongly recall the weird pictures and bold imagery of Daniel or the Revelation of S. John the Divine. As their name implies, they lift the veil that hides the future both here and hereafter from human eyes. They reveal the whole counsel of God. Such revelations satisfy man's innate craving to pry into the future, and naturally always appeal to the popular imagination.

But Apocalypses do more than this. They are ever a source of great comfort to many pious souls in dark days of trial and persecution. They keep alive the hopes of those who are on the verge of despair. This is why they sprang up so profusely in the period we are discussing. The yoke of

foreign oppressors rested continually on the land. Jehovah their King seemed to have forgotten His People, and Israel appeared to be lying under God's ban. "When will God again visit and redeem His people?" men were asking, for the present was a dismal blank. Hearts were crying in their anguish: "We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long."

Had God cancelled His everlasting Covenant with Israel? The mere thought was blasphemy, for every word God had spoken up to now He had fulfilled to the very letter.

But what did God's silence and the present dismal state of things mean? Once more men opened the books of the old prophets, and studied them even more closely than before to see if they had overlooked anything. To their joy, there they found a number of still unfulfilled promises which buoyed up their hopes. The woes and judgments of the prophetic predictions, these they knew by heart, for they had not only read them in books, they had realized them all in the Exile and after. But what of the glorious promises of the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel, what of the golden era of joy, plenty, peace, and comfort in the prophets' pages? There they were staring them in the face in God's Word; they had not yet arrived, but they were certainly coming.

Here was the clue, here the answer for which their

hearts yearned. In the mass of these unfulfilled prophecies a vast amount of material was at hand on which to build their hopes. By turning what was poetry into prose ; by transforming what was literal into figures of speech, and converting what was figure of speech into literal fact ; by subtle harmonizing and rearranging of this passage and that, they were easily able to use this mass of material in such a way as to map out the future according to their wishes, even in the matter of arriving at precise dates. In this spirit Daniel kept Israel's hopes alive by showing that the seventy years foretold by the prophet for the nation's glorious restoration had been misunderstood. The real seventy years were seventy weeks of years, so that the longed-for time was only just now drawing near.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Haggai had all embodied visions in their writings, but Daniel was the first to compose an Apocalypse on a large scale. He comforts the Jews in their affliction with the assurance of the speedy restoration of the kingdom to Israel in all its Davidic splendour here on earth. He also gives the first clear picture in bold outline of the *personal* Messiah, as Israel's King, to Whom is given "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him." More than this, so that the good Jews who have died unrequited may receive the reward of their good lives, Daniel ushers in this glorious kingdom by a *partial* resurrection of the dead :

"*many* of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." This may be said to be the first undoubted statement in the Bible of a resurrection of the *wicked* as well as of the just, and also of future retribution, though, of course, the key-note of immortality had been struck before—The Book of Daniel is the model on which all Apocalyptic after-writers shape their predictions.

Apocalypses differ from Scriptural Prophecy in many respects. The Old Testament Prophets were what we should now call "preachers." They were essentially moral and religious reformers. The predictive element in their prophecy was quite secondary. In the Apocalypses the predictive element is everything.

Again, the prophets still firmly believe that this world is God's world, and that in this world His goodness and truth will be justified. The Apocalyptic writer, on the other hand, looks upon the present as almost past praying for. All his interests and hopes lie in the hereafter, on earth or in heaven. The Apocalypses have been well called "tracts for hard times." The darker the outlook, the brighter and stronger the ray of hope that breaks through it and sees a glorious day at hand. But it is an impatient hope. It cannot wait for the coming of this Kingdom of God on earth by the slow working of moral forces gradually bringing about this splendid consummation. The Apocalyptist wants and expects

it to come very soon. He sees the Golden Age suddenly bursting forth upon an astonished earth, with Messiah appearing on the clouds of heaven to redeem and avenge His Chosen People.

In the main, all Apocalypses agree on certain points :—

(1) On a definite "Day of the Lord," Messiah will come. Sometimes the date is stated, at others it is spoken of as "known only to God" (e.g. 2 Esdr. vi.).

(2) Messiah's coming will be immediately preceded by an epoch of unparalleled wickedness, like Daniel's "Abomination of Desolation." Satan, in human form, is the leader of Messiah's enemies, and "His great adversary."

(3) There will be a period of great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, accompanied by many signs in heaven and on earth, earthquakes, famines, wars; the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give forth her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.

(4) This great tribulation will last for a fixed season, then shall Messiah suddenly appear in the clouds of heaven. But Elias must first prepare the way for Him. Messiah, at His Coming, will crush all His adversaries, and Satan with his hierarchy of devils will fall. Messiah does not need the ordinary weapons of warfare. He smites His enemies with the word of His mouth.

(5) Messiah then sits as a Judge on the throne of His glory, and metes out punishment to Satan and

his angels and to all godless and wicked men, who are cast into a fiery abyss, "a lake of fire." "According to their deeds," the righteous Judge pronounces sentence on all men, good and bad alike.

(6) Heaven and earth are transformed, and a millennium of peace and righteousness begins on earth. Messiah gathers unto Himself His elect from all nations, and over these He reigns in holiness, for there is no more sin or sorrow.

(7) The righteous dead are raised to share in His glory as a reward for their past tribulation.

In most Apocalypses, a *universal* resurrection is declared, and judgment is passed on all men one by one for the deeds done in the body.

Clearly, then, these Apocalypses pour a flood of light upon our New Testament pages. We do not imply that the New Testament merely borrows bodily from the Apocalypses, and repeats all they said in exact form and language. Very far from this. We might just as well suggest that the Apocalypses from Daniel onwards borrowed all *their* ideas from Persia. For it was there, almost certainly, that the Jews, during the Captivity, got their notion of a hierarchy of angels and archangels with God at their head, and a hierarchy of demons and archdemons under Satan's captaincy. It was from Persia, too, that came the picture of war in heaven, followed by the binding of the Fiend, the overthrow of evil, and the establishment of a millennium on earth, as well as the ideas of a new heaven and a

new earth, a personal resurrection, and a final judgment.

But, in Persian theology, these ideas were buried under a mass of crude, coarse, childish materialism. The Jews borrowed the ideas ; they came as suggestions stimulating Hebrew thought, and left their hands purified and spiritualized past all recognition.

In precisely the same manner, the New Testament borrows the suggestions and ideas of Apocalyptic literature, and turns its clay into gold.

It is the easiest thing in the world to detect a close parallel between the Apocalyptic description of Messiah's Coming and our Lord's own picture of the end of the world in S. Matth. xxiv. Yes, and it is also the easiest thing in the world to say that most of Christ's teaching may be found scattered through the Old Testament. Jewish scholars think that all Jesus said is found in the Talmud. Various attempts have even been made to prove that much of the material in the Gospel narratives may be traced to Buddhist sources.

There have always been two classes of people in the Christian world. One set delights in ransacking ancient Hebrew literature in order to discover anything which resembles our Lord's sayings or teaching, so as to prove that He said little, if anything, that was new. The other class thinks it honours Him by affirming His teaching to be absolutely new, with no roots in the past.

Both the one and the other are equally on the

wrong tack. To begin with, there can be no *new*, except by the help of some *old*. Originality does not mean an entirely new start, snapping off all the threads that link the present with the past. Such originality is the figment of a deranged brain. It never has existed, and it never can exist. It is not only a moral and physical impossibility, it would be the height of folly even if it were feasible. If our Lord had spread out before His Jewish hearers a novel field of unfamiliar truths, He would have spoken in a language that conveyed no sort of meaning to them. We have already seen that Christ was a Jew by birth and education. His whole thought and teaching were cast in Jewish moulds. He so loved the Jewish Scriptures that He lived in them, and He spoke to Jews who were steeped to the lips in the words of their Old Testament. He may be the world's Teacher, but He spoke first of all as a Jew to Jews, and naturally used the modes of thought and speech familiar to them.

But Christ's teaching *is* new in this sense,—as He Himself points out,—it perfects that which in His predecessors was imperfect. He gathers up their scattered thoughts, frees them from the alloy of error blended with them, harmonizes, developes, completes them. "I am come, not to destroy, but to fulfil." He also adds very much of His own that is absolutely new, for few will be found to deny that the original element in Christ's teaching is enormous.

For Christians, we might adopt another line of

argument which to our own mind is even more convincing. Christ was among men before "the Word was made Flesh." There never was a time when He was not "that Light which lighteth every man that is born into the world." He was that Light by which Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, and all heathen sages caught glimpses of the truth, that Light by which Hebrew seers gazed more steadfastly into the same Truth. But, if all their light came from Him, is not He more than they? Is not the "Light of the World" brighter than His scattered beams?

Therefore we may admit the fact that Apocalyptic literature furnishes much of the form, language, material, the very atmosphere of the New Testament, without in any way detracting from the originality of Christ's Teaching. It simply means that, as a True Teacher, He links on His new doctrine to the hopes and beliefs which the Jews already cherish. He places Himself for the moment on the level which His contemporaries have attained, and gradually raises them nearer to His own.

To return to the Apocalypses; it is especially in the matter of "life after death" that the advance in the Apocrypha is most marked. In the Old Testament there are very few, if any, clear indications of a future state of personal immortality, with its rewards and punishments. According to the Hebrew conception, man at death descends into Sheol, a dreary region of darkness, a land of silence and forgetful-

ness (Ps. lxxxviii. 10 sq., cxv.), a kind of vast subterranean tomb, in which the ghosts of the departed do not even flit about, but lie like corpses in a sepulchre. In this shadowy, listless existence, persons cannot be said to live; they only vegetate, cut off from all fellowship with the living, either man or God (Ps. vi. 5; Is. xxxviii. 18). They have nothing to fear, nothing to hope for. Good and bad lie there all huddled together without moral distinction. True, many pious Hebrew souls rebelled against this conception of life after death. They had higher aspirations, which at times (e.g. Pss. xlix, lxxiii.) amount almost to personal conviction. But they had nothing certain to go upon.

As soon as we come to the Apocalypses all this is changed. In Daniel, we already have a picture of a *partial* resurrection both of the good and the bad, and very soon Daniel's "*many* shall rise, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt" becomes "*all* shall rise." In the Apocalyptic revelation of a general Resurrection, immediately followed by a great Day of Judgment, when the "sealed" books are opened, and, out of their records, each man is judged upon his own merits according to his good or evil deeds done in the body—we have a clear anticipation of Christian eschatology.

Thus did Apocalyptic vision find a solution for the problem which had so long exercised Old Testament saints, and hitherto received no answer. At last the righteousness of God is vindicated in the

eyes of men. The righteous may go to the wall in this life, while the wicked prosper, but, at the resurrection, all wrongs will once and for all be set right by God Himself.

Naturally, during this Apocalyptic period, Sheol itself undergoes a radical change in accordance with these enlarged ideas of life after death. Good and bad are no longer huddled together without moral distinction. Sheol is now divided into separate compartments. The souls of all men still have to go to Sheol at death, and there await the final Judgment Day that shall usher in Messiah's Kingdom; but, in the intermediate state, they have distinct habitations assigned them according to their merits. Sheol becomes a half-way house between death and judgment, where the departed already have a foretaste of their final bliss or doom. In some Apocalypses it is a place of purification as well, and the possibility of moral improvement after death is clearly implied.

The various departments of Sheol even have distinct names. Now, for the first time, we hear of "Abraham's bosom," "Paradise," "Gehenna," and "the lake of fire and brimstone."

Messianic expectations also undergo a radical change during this period, and in two opposed directions. One set of Apocalyptic writers maintains that earth cannot possibly be the scene of an *eternal* Messianic Kingdom. With these, the Final

Judgment is placed, not at the inauguration, but at the close of the reign of Messiah on earth, and *heaven* is the true sphere both of the Kingdom and the Judgment.

As a rule, however, the Apocalypse echoes the more popular idea which seized people's fancy just before Christ's Advent, and revive the old conception of Messiah as a great Davidic Prince who should really and actually restore the Kingdom to Israel here on earth. Jewish political hopes had been greatly buoyed up of late. In former days, the political horizon loomed so black that a *spiritual* Messiah was all they could perhaps hope for. Now they wanted a Messiah of a more tangible kind, a real King of their own on earth, with all the pomp, magnificence, and power of a David or a Solomon, only on a very much larger scale.

Indeed, it was precisely this material secularization of Messianic expectation that so alienated the masses from our Lord. A suffering and meek Messiah, even though an Isaiah might so have pictured Him, was not at all in harmony with the views of the main body of the Jews of our Lord's day, or to their liking. His own disciples, even, were unprepared for such a spiritual Messiah: "We had trusted that it had been He which should have restored the Kingdom to Israel" (S. Luke xxiv. 21).

Not that the "*spiritual* Messianic hope" was entirely dead when Christ appeared. It was not. Many pious and enlightened souls still yearned

for Messiah, picturing Him not as a great conquering King, but as a strong and tender *Consoler*, Who should comfort them for all their sorrows and deliver them from the bondage of sin. "May I see the consolation of Israel," was a common formula of aspiration with hundreds of enlightened Jews besides Simeon. This was their idea of the "salvation which God had prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of His people Israel."

But not so with the masses. They expected and wanted a Messiah who should lead them to universal victory and crush all their foes; a Messiah who should inaugurate an era of great *material* prosperity.

Two other points should be noted in connection with this prolific period:—

(a) It brought into prominence, if it did not actually create, the various Jewish sects (e.g. Sadducees, Pharisees) of which we hear so much in the Gospels (see Chapter XXV.).

(b) It produced just that combination of circumstances which made the world ripe for Christ's Advent at the precise moment when He did come. It was not by mere chance that our Lord was born in Palestine,—the very centre of the then known world,—at the exact time when the Greek language prevailed everywhere as a common means of universal intercourse, and when the whole world was but one country under Rome.

It has been truly said: "The City of God is built at the confluence of three civilizations." Three several lines of historical development converged to a meeting-point when Christ appeared, and each contributed to the spread and success of His Gospel,—Palestine, Greece, and Rome.

Palestine. The Jews had for many centuries been specially trained to a knowledge of the One true and perfectly righteous God. They were now scattered all over the civilized ancient world, paving the way for Christ by spreading this conception of God everywhere. Morally and religiously, they prepared the world for the entrance of Christianity. "Salvation is of the Jews."

Greece. Alexander the Great had established the supremacy of the Greek tongue over all lands, made it the common medium and vehicle of thought everywhere. The commercial enterprise of the Greek-speaking peoples since his day had still further extended the scope of the Greek language. Thus was provided a universal language calculated to facilitate immensely the evangelization of the world.

Rome. A still more momentous factor was the fact that the entire known world was then embraced under Rome's imperial sway. The narrow barriers of nationality had been broken down. From the Euphrates to the Atlantic there was settled government, order, and law, and, by the splendid system of Roman roads, lines of easy communication lay open in every direction.

PART III.

THE GOSPELS.

- (1) Christianity and Gospel-Criticism. (Chap. XI.)
- (2) The Synoptic Problem. (Chap. XII.)
- (3) Source of S. Mark's Gospel. (Chap. XIII.)
- (4) Is S. Mark the Interpreter of S. Peter? (Chap. XIV.)
- (5) S. Mark's own witness to its Petrine origin. (Chap. XV.)
- (6) Outline-sketch of S. Luke and his Gospel. (Chap. XVI.)
- (7) S. Luke's sources—Matthæan *Logia*. (Chap. XVII.)
- (8) S. Matthew. (Chap. XVIII.)
- (9) S. Matthew (*continued*). (Chap. XIX.)
- (10) S. John—Introductory—the problem stated. (Chap. XX.)
- (11) S. John—Inconclusiveness of the external evidence. (Chap. XXI.)
- (12) S. John—a Gospel transfigured by its leading idea: "the Word was made Flesh." (Chap. XXII.)
- (13) S. John—The internal evidence examined. (Chap. XXIII.)
- (14) S. John—Data for solution of problem: Who is its author? (Chap. XXIV.)

Argument.

A CRITICISM of the Gospels is not an attack on the Christian Faith. Modern criticism wondrously substantiates the traditional view of the age and value of our Gospel-records. The most unassailable proof of the truth of Christianity is the existence of the Christian Church itself, with its Sacraments. Recapitulation of the main conclusions arrived at by Higher Critics in connection with the origin and growth of Gospel-literature. Dates of our New Testament books.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRISTIANITY AND GOSPEL-CRITICISM.

MANY people who are ready to admit that Criticism is permissible in the Old Testament, resent it in the New. They protest that here it is wrong and out of place, certainly in the Gospels. Before the shrine of the Christian Faith, the critic should at least pause and stay his hand.

Such protests are both unworthy and vain. Unworthy,—for it is the confession of a weak and faltering faith to wish to evade honest investigation; vain,—because, whether we like it or not, criticism has long since entered the New Testament field. For seventy years and more, the Gospels have been subjected to the most searching criticism by friend and foe alike. With what result? The authority of our New Testament books stands on a firmer basis than ever; the Gospels have gained fresh force and strength by the attacks made upon them^a;

^a As Westcott has pointed out, the Bible, like the Church, gains by its trials. As long as it is unassailed, an unquestioning traditional view accepts it all alike as one inspired Word of God, and does not appreciate the variety of its component parts. The union of our four Gospels in one New Testament, together with the mechanical Jewish dogma of Inspiration, blind our eyes and blunt our feelings for the great variety and distinct individuality of the separate works thus united. It wanted the assaults of the Tubingen School to open our eyes that were holden.

more than this, the objections once raised by the Tubingen School against the genuineness and historicity of New Testament books have been shattered by the Higher Criticism itself.

Twelve years ago, Dr. Harnack wrote to this effect: There was a time when people felt obliged to regard the oldest Christian literature, including of course the New Testament, as a tissue of deceptions and falsifications. That time is past. In the whole New Testament, there is probably but a single writing which can be called, in the strictest sense of the word, pseudonymous, — the second Epistle of Peter. The number of interpolations in the New Testament books is very slight and harmless. Baur and his School believed themselves able to disprove the traditional views of the development of early Christianity by throwing over the testimony of the New Testament writings, and by bringing down their date of writing several decades. The assumptions of Baur and his School are now, one may say, disproved. A time will come,—it is already drawing nigh,—when men will not trouble themselves much about these New Testament critical problems, because the essential accuracy of tradition as to the history of primitive Christianity will have acquired general assent, with but few unimportant exceptions.

No doubt this remarkable declaration would not be fully endorsed by many theological scholars in England or abroad. Indeed, such an unfair and exaggerated interpretation was put upon his words

that Harnack himself has been compelled, in self-defence, considerably to modify them in a recent work which itself establishes the truth of his original statement^b. The plain fact remains, however, that S. Mark, never a favourite author in the Church, has been reinstated in his rightful position as the writer of a Gospel of the first rank and value, while Harnack has convincingly proved that the traditional standpoint of Christianity is right in assigning the third Gospel to "Luke, the beloved Physician." We may no longer believe S. Matthew or S. John to be Apostolic works, but the Higher Criticism has established their genuineness, their first-century date and their claims to be regarded as works embodying Apostolic teaching. It is therefore true that the total result of modern critical work on our Gospels has been to substantiate in a remarkable degree the view which has always been held in the Church as to their age, their spiritual character, and their inestimable worth. The New Testament has a wondrous way of vindicating itself.

More than this. There is another great consideration which is too often overlooked. Many Christians think and speak as if the Truth of our Christian Faith stands or falls with the truthfulness of our

^b "*Luke the Physician.*" "My friends have taken offence at my statement. I here offer them a new proof of it. I am not responsible for the misapprehensions to which my statement has given rise. I guarded myself against them,—as it seems, to no purpose. I now express my conviction that many traditional views are untenable."

four Gospels. It does nothing of the kind. Were criticism to do to-morrow what it has never yet done, nor is likely to succeed in achieving, were it to invalidate the historicity of any one of our Gospels, or of all four of them, actually banishing the records of our Evangelists to the realms of romance, this would not relegate Christianity or its Faith to the same region. In the genuine Epistles of S. Paul, with or without the Acts of the Apostles, we should still have ample evidence for a reconstruction of our Lord's Life, Death and Resurrection^c.

We may go even further. Assuming for the moment that there never had been a New Testament at all, the best credentials of Christianity would still remain intact. The best, soundest and most unassailable proof of the truth of Christianity is the existence of the Christian Church itself, which is worth more than all the book-evidence in the world. In this Church, or Society of the followers of Jesus, we have an actual, living, historical institution which

^c e.g. from the speeches of the Acts alone, Westcott quotes for the last Week and the 40 days: The betrayal (Acts ii. 23); the condemnation by the Sanhedrin (xiii. 27); the failure of the charge (xiii. 28); the conduct of Pilate (iii. 13) and of Herod (iv. 27); the choice of Barabbas (iii. 14); the urgency of the people and rulers at Jerusalem (xiii. 27, 28); the Crucifixion (iv. 10, v. 30, x. 39) by the hand of Gentiles (ii. 23); the Burial (xiii. 29); Resurrection on the third day (x. 40); the manifestation of the Risen Christ to fore-ordained witnesses (x. 41) for many days (xiii. 31), how He did eat and drink with them after He rose (x. 41); the charge to the Apostles (x. 42); the Ascension to the right hand of God (ii. 33; iii. 21).

has existed without a break ever since the days of its Founder.

The Church of Christ is a fact, a stupendous fact based on events which happened in the first century. It is built, not on written documents, but on the Person of Christ as its bed-rock foundation. It was already in existence and thriving long before the records of a single book of the New Testament were written. In spite of all obstacles, it has come through twenty centuries in unbroken succession and continues to live with extraordinary vitality. Of this Church we can give no explanation whatever, if we deny that the earliest Christians firmly believed the Life, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord to be actual facts.

Therefore, however unhistorical the Life of Jesus, as narrated by our Evangelists, may be declared to be by advanced critics, no amount of adverse criticism can shake the solid fact that we have actually here with us now the Church of Christ, built on the Person of Jesus, and on the personal conviction of His followers from earliest days that He is the Son of God. Of this conviction on the part of the Apostles there cannot be a shadow of a doubt. If anything could have shattered the Church, it was our Lord's ignominious Death. Yet His handful of followers, so convinced were they of Christ's Messiahship, stood this tremendous test, and the Church came through this crisis safely and survived the shock of the Crucifixion. It was

our Lord's Resurrection, however, that rallied and wondrously quickened the faith and spirits of His followers. Even critics who deny the Resurrection itself admit that the disciples most firmly believed that our Lord had risen from the grave and visibly appeared to them after His Resurrection. Christ's followers were so fully persuaded of this fact that they were prepared to lay down their lives in proclaiming and attesting it. This evangelization they achieved with such success that, long before a single Gospel had been composed, the Church numbered tens of thousands of Christians all over the civilized world, who shared the Apostles' convictions and accepted their beliefs.

It was this Church, founded by Christ Himself and built by Apostles and Prophets, that gave us our Gospels, not the Gospels that created the Church. For 150 years, it was the living voice of the Church, and not books, that formed the Christian New Testament. Our Gospels even then only replaced the living voice because they faithfully embodied it. We may go still further. If our Evangelists had not crystallized Apostolic Teaching at this early date, by thus reproducing it in a fixed documentary form, it would not have been lost to us. The main facts of the Gospel-story would still have continued to be handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation after, as before, 150 A.D. They inevitably must have been thus transmitted, for the life of the Church is indissolubly bound up with the

essential facts of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord. Apart from them, the Church has no *raison d'être*.

Hence it is that, if we were robbed to-morrow of our Gospels, if they were proved historically valueless, we should be greatly the losers^d, but Christianity would in nowise be undermined. The critics would still have to account for and explain away the Church and her Sacraments. Our Gospels are not the foundation of our Faith, they only confirm it.

Our preliminary investigations are now ended. This is the sum of them :—

(1) The Bible of the primitive Church was the Old Testament, and the Old Testament only, but they read Christ between every line of it.

(2) There was no New Testament, in our sense of the word. Oral tradition, or Apostolic preaching and teaching, took its place.

(3) Oral tradition passed through three stages between 30—70 A.D. (*a*) *early stage*: this is very

^d "The very first generation of Christians created for itself an invaluable literature. Its value cannot be overrated. To these its most ancient scriptures, next to the Person of its Founder, Christianity owes the *faculty of self-recollection* which has prevented this religion, amid the maze of history, from ever quite losing its own peculiar character; which has indeed ever again enabled it to renew its youth and to preserve itself inwardly independent of the changing factors of human development." *Von Soden*.

pure, but somewhat informal and unsystematic ; (*b*) *middle stage* : pure, fully developed and systematic ; (*c*) *late stage* : identical with (*b*) but slightly interpolated and adapted.

(4) Oral tradition had one type, but local varieties.

(5) The Apostles wrote Epistles and Gospels, but regarded them in the light of occasional writings, and had not the least intention of "making" Scripture.

(6) Many genuine Apostolic writings are lost, e.g. S. Matthew's Gospel, S. Paul's Epistle to the Laodiceans, and one to the Corinthians.

(7) Written Gospels abounded from 60 A.D. onwards. Passages from them and other writings were read aloud in churches, but for edification only, not as Scripture.

(8) Papias (130—140 A.D.) refers to the Gospel of S. Matthew, and to a ^e S. Mark, but with this exception, none of our Gospels is mentioned by name before 150 A.D.

(9) No Gospel was regarded as "Scripture" till 120—130 A.D., if as early.

(10) Our four Gospels were probably written between 65—100 A.D.

(11) S. Paul died before 65 A.D.^f, and never saw one of our Gospels. His own Epistles were written,

^e See note, 208 c.

^f The dates of S. Paul's conversion and martyrdom are thus given :—

	<i>Harnack.</i>	<i>Ramsay.</i>	<i>Lightfoot.</i>
Conversion	30	33	34
Martyrdom	64	65	67.

quoted and officially recognized long before our Gospels. He had planted Churches all over Southern Europe before our earliest Gospel (S. Mark) was composed.

(12) Our four Gospels are probably among the latest New Testament books^g.

^g The following list fairly represents the modern view of the chronological order of our New Testament books:—

		(Hastings, D.B.)	Dr. Plummer*.
S. Paul's	James -	40-50 A.D.	45-49 or 60-62 A.D.
	1-2 Thess. -	51-53 A.D.	47-53
	Galatians -	53	51-53
	1-2 Cors. -	55	52-56
	Romans -	55-56	54-57
	Philippians, Ephes. } Coloss. Philemon }	59-61	54-62
S. Paul's (??)	Pastoral Epistles } 1-2 Timothy—Titus }	67-68	59-67
	1 Peter -	64?-75	60-75
	S. Mark -	67-70	65-75
	Hebrews -	70	64-67
	Jude -	67-80	62-80
	Apocalypse -	?	69-96
	S. Matthew -	68-70	67-80
	S. Luke -	75-80	79-89
	Acts -	70-80	78-90
	S. John -	70-90	80-100
	S. John's Epp. -	70-90?	80-100
	2 Peter -	140-160	65-175

* For Plummer's dates, see "Guardian," June 12, 1907, "The Bible and Modern Criticism."

CHAPTER XII.



THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM.

Argument.

S. MATTHEW, S. Mark and S. Luke agree, in language and matter, in a way that no three absolutely independent writers possibly can agree. They all three embody a "common-stock Gospel," which is almost identical with the Gospel of S. Mark, admittedly the earliest Evangelist of them all. There are three ways of accounting for the strong synoptic family likeness: (1) All three Synoptists copy an earlier document; (2) They reproduce the same stereotyped oral tradition; (3) S. Matthew and S. Luke copy S. Mark. Reasons for believing that the first two hypotheses break down, while the third apparently covers all the facts.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM.

EVEN the most casual reader of our Gospels must have been struck by the glaring fact that the first three Gospels are closely and intimately related to one another. They bear the strongest possible family likeness. The Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, stands in a class by itself; it is so markedly different in almost every respect.

For the moment, therefore, we may leave the Fourth Gospel out of view, and approach what is called the Synoptic Problem. The term "Synoptic" ^a is commonly applied to S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke by reason of their pronounced resemblance. They present nearly everything from the same point of view, see eye to eye, narrate the self same events almost in the self-same words.

We shall see that a closer examination reveals another striking fact. S. Matthew and S. Luke each embody S. Mark. They have additional matter of

^a σὺνοπτικός "seeing the whole together," said of books containing parts that can be brought under the eye in parallel columns as virtually identical.

their own, but the substance of S. Mark's Gospel forms the backbone of S. Matthew's and S. Luke's as well. Or, to put it in another way. If we compare the Synoptic Gospels to a building, S. Mark supplies practically all the stones. It is only the gaps between the stones that are filled up with new material in S. Matthew and S. Luke. The literary mortar filling up these interstices may vary in each of the three Synoptists, but the stones are identically the same. They come from the same quarry, they have been hewn and shaped by the same hand.

Thus it has been shown that if S. Mark is divided into 106 sections or paragraphs, S. Matthew borrows 93 of these, S. Luke 81. There are only 5 which one or the other of these two Evangelists has not bodily incorporated in his narrative. Or if we take S. Mark's 674 (R.V.) verses, only 50 remain when S. Matthew and S. Luke have made their loans.

A glance at Rushbrooke's *Synopticon* and Sir John Hawkins' *Horæ Synopticae*,—two invaluable, nay, indispensable works—will prove convincingly that this extraordinary coincidence between the three Gospels is not limited to their matter, it extends even to words and phrases and turns of expression, e.g.^b:—

^b The following passages, taken at random, will show the same verbal coincidence:—S. Matth. xvi. 13—28, S. Mark vi. 13—28; S. Luke ix. 18 sqq.; S. Mark iv. 3 sqq.; S. Matth. xi. 27 sqq.; S. Luke viii. 5 sqq.; S. Mark vi. 13—22, S. Matth. ix. 9—17, sqq.; S. Luke v. 27—39; S. Mark i. 24, 25, S. Luke iv. 34, 35; S. Mark i. 14—19, S. Luke xviii. 16—20; S. Luke vi. 9, 10; S. Mark x. 1—4, 5, 11—12; S. Matth. xxi. 33—44, S. Luke xx. 9—18. Mark

S. Mark i. 40—44 (R.V.).

"If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And being moved with compassion, He stretched forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean. And He strictly charged him, and straightway sent him out, and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

S. Mark ii. 23 sqq. (R.V.)

"He was going on the sabbath-day through the corn-fields, and His disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

And the Pharisees said unto Him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath-day that which is not lawful?

And He said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him?

How he entered into the house of God, when Abiathar was high-priest, and did eat the shewbread which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests, and gave also to them that were with him? And He said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; so that the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath."

S. Matth. viii. 2—4.

"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And He stretched forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou made clean. And straightway his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

S. Matth. xii. 1 sqq.

"Jesus went on the sabbath-day through the corn-fields, and His disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck ears of corn and to eat.

But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto Him, Behold, Thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the sabbath.

But He said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him?

How he entered into the house of God and did eat the shewbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests?

* * * *

For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

S. Luke v. 12—16.

"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And He stretched forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him. And He charged him to tell no man; but go thy way, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

S. Luke vi. 1 sqq.

"On a sabbath, He was going through the corn-fields: and His disciples plucked the ears of corn and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

But certain of the Pharisees said, Why do ye that which it is not lawful to do on the sabbath-day?

And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read even this, what David did, when he was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he entered into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests alone? And He said unto them, The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Prof. Norton has calculated that one-sixth of S. Matthew is word for word the same as S. Mark, and one-tenth of S. Luke; also that this word-likeness is most pronounced in discourses, less so in the narration of events.

But the agreement and coincidences in word and matter taken together are so remarkable that some explanation of this strange phenomenon must be sought for. All the more so because of another striking fact. If we allow for the moment those details of the story which are peculiar to *one* Gospel to remain out of sight, and fix our attention simply and solely on what is common to S. Mark and at least one other Gospel, we get a connected Gospel-story and a perfect Portrait of the Christ.

In other words, underlying the three Synoptic Gospels there is a "common-stock Gospel," and it is almost identical with S. Mark.

But the question will ever recur: How are we to account for the striking family likeness in matter and wording so apparent in the Synoptists?

The old "verbal inspiration" theory will not give us the clue. That answer will *not* do. If the Holy Spirit had dictated the very words to the Evangelists, then their Gospels should be exactly alike, and a single one would suffice. Again, on this hypothesis, how are we to account for a large number of passages, even in the Synoptists, and still more in S. John, which are so different, so inconsistent, that it is often impossible to harmonize them?

How then are we to account for the strange family

likeness? The verbal-inspiration explanation is out of court, and accidental coincidence is still more unsatisfactory. If any three perfectly independent reporters were to sit down to write an account of the same event of which they had each been an eye-witness, possibly two or three consecutive words might here and there happen to be alike in some paragraphs, but certainly not six or seven in one short clause or sentence after another. If we knew for a positive fact that these writers had penned their report of the event absolutely independently, and yet discovered that considerable verbal coincidences had crept into their narrative not only here and there, but repeatedly, what then? We should naturally conclude that each writer, at the time of drawing up his report, had before him some common document, directly bearing on that event, from which all three reporters extensively copied. This would be the only answer that would actually cover the facts.

Now, this precisely represents the Synoptic problem. S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke agree in a way that no three independent writers possibly can agree. Did they copy each other's work? In early days, S. Augustine thought so, for he speaks of S. Mark as the "copyist and epitomizer" of S. Matthew. This dogmatic assertion is a simple way out of the difficulty, only, unfortunately, it is not true. It was a mere guess, and a wrong one.

S. Augustine had neither the comprehensive knowledge, nor the soundness of method to solve such

a hard problem. He judged mainly by the actual contents of the two Gospels, and greatly preferred the completeness and definite teaching of S. Matthew—which he believed to be an Apostolic work,—to the unstudied outline, the croppel and curtailed character of S. Mark. The shortness, simplicity, and rough style of the latter naturally gave the impression that the second Gospel represents the notes of a copyist or disciple rather than the direct and original work of an Apostle. All this is changed now since Lachmann showed that the solution of the problem is purely a question, not of the completeness of the contents, but of literary criticism. It is not till quite recently, however, after years of patient research and the sifting of a vast mass of evidence, that it has been possible even to suggest a probable answer to the Synoptic Problem.

On one point all scholars are agreed. Everything in S. Mark tends to prove, not only that it is the first of our Gospels in point of time, but that it represents a far earlier cycle of oral tradition. Even Von Soden is of opinion that in S. Mark we have “a narrative due to the combined effort of S. Peter and his assistant S. Mark, composed not later than 64 A.D., while the reminiscences of S. Peter embodied in Mark belong to a much earlier date”.

* Von Soden, however, is convinced that our S. Mark is *not* the original S. Mark. He holds that the first edition was characterized by a striking brevity, and the absence of narrator's notes, or any religious phraseology or oratorical ornament. In the original S. Mark the facts alone speak, and Jesus is very human, deeply stirred by feeling. Few miracles occur in it. The second edition is years later. The

To quote but a few of the more striking evidences of S. Mark's antiquity :

Matter. (a) S. Mark begins, as did the Apostles (cf. Acts i. 22, x. 37, xiii. 24, 25), with John's Baptism. There is no mention of the Virgin Birth^d. The Temptation is dismissed in one short verse.

(b) S. Mark's references to the Resurrection are extremely meagre. S. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 5—8, written in 55 A.D., gives us a list of six Resurrection-appearances, so we cannot attribute S. Mark's silence to the fact that oral tradition itself was silent on this point. The loss of the final leaf of S. Mark's Gospel may account for much, but it is also probable that his notes were written at a time when Christians were profoundly convinced of the Resurrection, and needed no elaborate statistics of all our Lord's appearances after this stupendous event.

(c) S. Mark contains many passages and expressions which would be likely to prove stumbling-

Evangelist has caught the spirit of the original, but he works up his pictures and is concerned with deeper truths, while Jesus is now very superhuman, so miracles abound.

Von Soden's conjecture is plausible. That in Mark we have two editions, seems clear, but why assume two editors? S. Peter gave S. Mark his reminiscences; S. Mark embodied them in a Gospel long after, when S. Peter was dead (Irenæus). Much had happened in the interval and S. Mark's own experience had ripened. Is it surprising that in his "Memoirs" of S. Peter, which had formed the basis of S. Mark's catechizing for a lifetime, S. Peter's reminiscences are expanded and coloured here and there by a strong christological interest and bear the impress of S. Mark's own vivid style?

^d Dr. Sanday questions whether Mary's secret was generally known till it was embodied in S. Luke's Gospel (Hastings' D.B. "Jesus Christ," II. 643).

blocks in the way of weak believers, and such as would not have been tolerated except in a Gospel of great antiquity. The best proof of this is that S. Matthew and S. Luke either suppress or tone them down, e.g.:

S. Mark i. 32—34, and esp. vi. 5, seem to limit our Lord's power.

S. Mark iii. 5, x. 14, xiv. 33 ascribe to our Lord emotions which seem too purely human.

S. Mark iii. 21, x. 18 speak of our Lord as "beside Himself," and refusing to be called "good." Similarly, S. Mark xv. 44, and xvi. 4 ("Pilate marvelled if He were already dead," and "They see that the stone is rolled away") might be used by our Lord's enemies to support their allegation that Christ was not really dead, but in a faint, and that His disciples came by night, stole the Body, and finding Him still alive, gave out that He had risen again.

(*d*) S. Mark also speaks very disparagingly of the Twelve, e.g. their dulness of understanding (viii. 16—22, ix. 32); their selfish ambition (ix. 33 sqq.).

Style. The style and diction of S. Mark equally bear witness to its antiquity.

(*a*) The Greek is poor, rude, colloquial, full of Aramaisms, Latinisms, and other barbarisms, for which S. Matthew and especially S. Luke substitute a more tasteful and classical vocabulary.

(*β*) The grammar is very bad and irregular. Broken constructions also abound. "And" seems to be the only conjunction with which S. Mark is

familiar, while his vocabulary is so limited that "forthwith," "straightway," "immediately" recur at every other verse.

(γ) (If the hypothesis of a "lost leaf" is rejected) S. Mark ends his Gospel^e in the most awkward and abrupt manner with the ill-omened words at the Grave, "for they were afraid."

All these peculiarities may be summed up as exhibiting what Prof. Burkitt calls S. Mark's "unecclesiastical unconventionality, a characteristic which we might expect to find in a primitive document coming from the circle of the earliest Christians and written before it had been considered what style of writing was appropriate for telling the story of our Lord's Ministry."

Now, in the face of the admitted fact that S. Mark's written Gospel was already in existence years before S. Matthew's and S. Luke's were composed, if these two Evangelists wrote independently of his Gospel, is it not passing strange that they adhere so closely to S. Mark in the following respects? e.g. :—

(a) *Subject-matter.* Our Lord's Life may have been short, but it was very full of incidents of absorbing interest. S. Paul's Epistles show that Oral Tradition, even before S. Mark's day, recorded many sayings and events of our Lord's Life not embodied in our Mark. Oral Tradition was a rich mine only very partially exploited by the second Evangelist (cf. S. John xxi. 25). S. Mark contains

^e xvi. 9-20 is admittedly an interpolation.

a typical and masterly selection of some of these incidents, but only of a few. He only summarily refers to the journeys and teaching of our Lord, and confines himself (except for the Last Week) to the Galilean Ministry. It would have been the easiest task, out of the large mass of available material, to make a totally different selection for a "Life of Christ." *Why, then, do S. Matthew and S. Luke adopt S. Mark's facts almost word for word?*

(b) *Chronological order.* Precisely the same remark applies to S. Mark's chronological order. Strictly speaking, there is none, except for the Last Week. The only fixed land-marks are the Baptism, Temptation, Confession of S. Peter, and Transfiguration. The events of the ever-memorable Last Week are, of course, indelibly stamped on the memory, and repeated in their exact order; so, in all probability, are S. Peter's recollections of the eventful day on which he left all to follow Christ (S. Mark, chap. i.). Other events of the Ministry are "viewed in the light of its end, the crowning facts of the Passion and Resurrection, so that the whole period was one in essence, undivided by years or festivals, and the record would be marked not so much by divisions of time as by groups of events^f." Over and over again, in S. Mark, incidents, journeys, conversations of our Lord are introduced by such vague phrases as: "in those days," "and they were by the seaside," "He arose and came to another place." S. Mark, as was natural, is no longer in a

^f Westcott.

position to assign to each tradition or reminiscence its right place in the chronological order of events, though he still knows the critical epochs of the Ministry and their characteristics, and is admirably guided by these in the arrangement of his material.

Yet S. Matthew and S. Luke adopt S. Mark's order. The common order is S. Mark's order[§], and where one departs from it, the other follows it. This is not merely the case where there appears to be some historical connection, but even in sections which are not so linked together. Constantly do we find S. Matthew and S. Luke dropping awhile the thread of S. Mark's narrative, interpolating a new passage of their own, sometimes of great length, and then taking up the thread again just where they dropped it.

(c) *Language*^h. We have already noticed that the resemblance in wording, structure of sentences, even in turns of expression and particles, is so striking that it clearly points to the use of a common written

[§] Lachmann: "There is not that diversity of order in the Gospel-narratives which people suppose. The diversity is there if you compare Mark with Matthew, but, if you compare Mark with both the others, it is very small."

^h We know that there are about 21 passages cited by Sir J. Hawkins where S. Matth. and S. Luke agree as against S. Mark. Prof. Burkitt has shown that this evidence amounts to very little indeed. But there is another important consideration. We have seen that we narrowly escaped losing S. Mark altogether, only one copy (probably mutilated) being left at one period. We also know how corrupt the text of our Gospels was even in 180 A.D. If we had the original S. Mark, would there be in these 21 passages any variation from his text?

document in the composition of the Synoptic Gospels. No other hypothesis will cover the facts, not even the most stereotyped oral tradition.

(c²) *Dual expressions.* S. Mark's style is characterized by a fondness for such dual expressions as "the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean." "He hath Beelzebub: he hath an unclean spirit," "she cast in all she had, even all her living," "no man could bind him, no not with chains." It is perfectly clear that this is a characteristic of S. Mark's own style and not a loan. Some commentators have tried to make out that S. Mark copied from S. Luke and S. Matthew, borrowing here a piece from one, and there a piece from another; hence these dual passages. A reference to the following passages which are peculiar to S. Mark will convincingly prove that S. Mark's dual expressions are his own; e.g. S. Mark ii. 19; iii. 5; iii. 27; iii. 22, 30; v. 3, 5; xii. 44.

Now we constantly come across this curious fact in connection with S. Mark's dualisms, S. Matthew takes one half of a dual expression, S. Luke the other; e.g.:—

- | | |
|---|---|
| { | S. Mark i. 32, "At even, when the sun did set." |
| | S. Matth. viii. 16, "When the even was come." |
| | S. Luke iv. 40, "When the sun was setting." |
| | S. Mark i. 42, "the leprosy departed, and he was cleansed." |
| | S. Matth. viii. 3, "his leprosy was cleansed." |
| | S. Luke v. 13, "the leprosy departed," |
| | &c., &c., &c. |

On two points the evidence seems clear. S. Mark is an earlier Gospel than the other two, and S. Matthew and S. Luke embody the same material as S. Mark. Thus far the modern rival schools of critics agree. But here they part company. One set of scholars insists that the "common-stock Gospel" which they all three incorporate is oral tradition pure and simple. A second school maintains that the Synoptic family likeness is due to their use of a common document, earlier than them all, which they each copied independently, only S. Mark was more anxious than the other Evangelists to omit nothing.

In England, till quite recently, the oral tradition view was most in favour; elsewhere, scholars supported the "common-document" hypothesis. For convenience sake, a name has been given to this imaginary document. It is technically known as *Ur-Marcus*, because S. Mark follows it so closely. Serious attempts have even been made to reconstruct *Ur-Marcus*. We have seen that there are certain Gospel-portions which are common to all three Synoptics; other portions common to two Gospels, but lacking in the third; and lastly each Gospel has a portion peculiar to itself. It is maintained that if you collate all the matter common to S. Mark and at least one of the other two, then you have *Ur-Marcus*. This resultant "common-stock" Gospel does certainly form a more or less connected narrative, and the "common document" advocates insist that it approximates far more closely to the

original Aramaic Apostolic tradition than any of our three Gospels.

This *Ur-Marcus* hypothesis was very popular a few years ago, but at the present day the prevailing view seems to be that *Ur-Marcus* never existed. It is an uncalled-for legendary fiction. At any rate, it is so indistinguishable from our S. Mark that the diversity between the two is a distinction without a difference, and S. Mark itself is now almost universally admitted to be the original document.

If we eliminate *Ur-Marcus*, the other question still remains to be answered: Does S. Mark reproduce oral tradition pure and simple, or is Papias' statement correct when he tells us that in S. Mark we have the reminiscences of S. Peter written by Mark his convert, disciple and interpreter?

The "oral tradition" school is confident that tradition and tradition alone lies at the foundation of all three Synoptists, and supplies all their common material. They deny that S. Matthew and S. Luke copied S. Mark. Their plea is this:—Oral tradition was there in Palestine ready-to-hand, and in a stereotyped form. The author of S. Matthew, certainly, and S. Mark and S. Luke in all probability, were catechists, and the catechetical instruction of Christians, as S. Paul's Epistles prove, was most systematic. True, the Apostolic teaching, or oral tradition, was not learnt by heart, but the Jews had wonderful memories. Apart from Jewish reverence for tradition, it is characteristic of

people who write but little, and repeat the same story often, seldom to vary their narrative. Hence the close resemblance in the three Gospels. Oral tradition fully covers all the phenomena of the Synoptists. It adequately accounts for their family likeness, while the new material contained in S. Matthew and S. Luke is similarly explained. It proceeds from the same "tradition" source, but tradition of a later date¹.

Can we reasonably accept this view? Oral tradition was quite competent faithfully to transmit by word of mouth a Gospel-record as long and complete as our S. Mark. It is quite possible that S. Mark does represent oral tradition in an undiluted form. But the majority of modern scholars are

¹ "The simple and natural solution of the problem is indicated in Acts ii. 42 and v. 42. There we have the *teaching of the Apostles* as one of the foundations on which the Church of Jerusalem was built. In this primitive apostolic teaching, the life and death of Jesus certainly occupied the first place. These narratives, daily repeated by the Apostles, and by the evangelists taught in their school, must have quickly taken a more or less definite form, not only as to the tenor of each account, but also the connecting of several accounts in a single group ordinarily forming the matter of one lesson. S. Luke's Preface proves this. Primitive apostolic tradition, such then is the type, at once firm and yet within certain limits malleable, which has left its ineffaceable impress on our first three Gospels. Thus are satisfactorily explained their resemblances and their differences. S. Matthew, writing for Jews, adheres most closely to the Palestinian type. S. Luke, writing for cultivated Gentiles, omits Jewish details and collates oral tradition to meet the needs of Pauline Churches. S. Mark, writing both for Jews and Gentiles, forms as it were the link of union between Matthew and Luke. Still drawing from the riches of oral tradition, and his own memories, S. John supplements the elementary records of the Synoptists." (Godet.)

not prepared to accept the same view of S. Matthew and S. Luke for reasons already given in this chapter. The coincidences of selection, language, order, &c., are too remarkable to be thus explained away.

The "common-stock Gospel" narrative, *if taken by itself*, might easily be accounted for on the oral theory. The long string of words and phrases exactly alike in such passages as those quoted at the commencement of this chapter would also be satisfactorily covered by a more or less stereotyped oral tradition. Even the variations present no obstacle to this view, for "literary piety" was not as highly-valued then as now.

The oral traditionists present a plausible brief; their theory is very tempting, but their case seems to break down for the following reasons.

(1) They assume that S. Mark is a pure and simple reproduction of oral tradition, whereas Papias, on the authority of a personal friend of the Apostles, distinctly assures us that S. Mark's Gospel consists of personal reminiscences of S. Peter.

Now the second Gospel, on the face of it, seems to bear out Papias' statement to the letter, and it does not appear to support the "tradition" hypothesis. With its biographical details, its omission of practically everything outside the Galilean Ministry, its scanty allusions to our Lord's sayings (which, as we know, form the nucleus of tradition), its strange reticence on Christ's moral teaching and discourses, its omission of the Lord's Prayer, its rare reference to prophecy, its meagre account of the Resurrec-

tion, does S. Mark look like a faithful reproduction of Oral Tradition? We think not.

If we are wrong here, if the argument in the last section is not valid, if S. Mark *is* a true record of oral teaching, then we at once admit that two of our former objections must also go overboard. The arguments which we based on the extraordinary identity of chronological arrangement and of language break down. The Synoptists all three merely follow the order and wording of tradition more or less closely. It is true that the Apostolic oral teaching was not arranged in strict chronological order, but the Apostles remembered the epochs of the Ministry, and were guided by that knowledge in their arrangement of the material. Naturally, the Synoptists would follow the order as given in oral tradition, and the strangeness of the chronological coincidence vanishes; so does the similarity of the wording in many a passage, especially as this similarity is most pronounced in our Lord's own discourses.

(2) But what are we to say of the other two striking facts which we noted? How does it come about that in dealing with the "dual expressions" peculiar to S. Mark, S. Matthew so often takes one half of the double formula and S. Luke the other?

Once more. How is it that S. Matthew and S. Luke so faithfully reproduce the structure of the sentences found in our S. Mark, *even to the merest turns of expression*? Why do we find such constant and remarkable identity in many insignificant words,

such as conjunctions, particles, prepositions, trivial details which are not of the slightest importance? Over and over again, where S. Mark has a particular particle or conjunction, there it is in S. Matthew and S. Luke in exactly the same place, even though these two Evangelists may have broken the connection by adding new material of their own in the interval. Surely, these small connecting links might have been expressed in half-a-dozen other ways with equal ease.

Jewish memories may have been phenomenally retentive, but there is a limit even to this gift, especially when we remember that oral tradition was not learnt by heart, and letter-worship was discouraged. It could never, therefore, become absolutely stereotyped in its words, nor be reproduced with that sort of uniformity which this tenacious adherence to conjunctions, and such trivial words, implies.

Does not this place the oral traditionists on the horns of a dilemma? The oral theory, consistently driven to its logical conclusions, must mean one of two things. Either oral tradition was systematically taught word for word, or it was not. If it was learnt by heart, then the verbal differences in parallel passages of the Synoptists are inexplicable.

If, on the other hand, and as the evidence seems to show, a certain latitude was allowed in the choice of words, then the extraordinary coincidences in conjunctions, and other minute details, are again

inexplicable. The oral school must make their choice, but they cannot have it both ways.

To sum up. Here, as elsewhere, the conclusions of criticism attain to nothing more than a greater or less degree of probability. No absolutely convincing solution of the Synoptic Problem has yet been offered. We have indicated the considerations which seem to justify the abandonment of the oral hypothesis. The oral school, however, has not yet called all its witnesses or said its last word, and is still very far from being put out of court. An answer on their side is already forthcoming to the two chief objections of their opponents.

They account for the extraordinary parallelism in the Synoptic subject-matter by pointing out that it contains precisely those characteristics which we should expect in oral tradition of an early date. History necessarily comes before doctrine, for it is on historical facts that faith is based. Therefore, the earliest oral tradition reproduced by the Synoptists naturally embodies a vast amount of biographical details, while it omits moral teaching, discourses, and all but four parables.

They also find no insuperable difficulty in Papias' statement that S. Mark's Gospel contains the reminiscences of S. Peter. "S. Peter, as Papias himself indirectly tells us, was the chief catechist of the early primitive Church, as indeed that Apostle took the lead in everything in those earliest days. . . .

He was the author of the first cycle of oral teaching, as the Apostle Matthew was of the second^k." The similarity in S. Peter's reminiscences and in primitive tradition is thus explained.

In answer to the extraordinary verbal coincidences in minor words, such as conjunctions, they readily reply^k: "This, again, is just what one should expect. These little connecting links act as 'cues.' A man who commits poetry or any passage to memory would instantly break down if he forgot such links. Besides, the identity is only occasional. Quite enough of them have been changed to make the oral school suspicious about the use of documents."

We believe we have stated their case as fairly as traditionists themselves could wish. Readers must form their own judgment. All that is meant to be implied in this chapter is that the hypothesis which sees in our S. Mark the original "common document" seems to cover the whole ground more satisfactorily than any other theory at present in the field^l.

^k A. Wright.

^l It is, of course, admitted (1) that the Eschatological Discourse in S. Mark xiii. is drawn from a source not used by S. Mark elsewhere; (2) also that, over and above their loan from S. Mark, *at least* two other sources of information must be postulated for the additional matter found in S. Matthew and S. Luke.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOURCE OF S. MARK'S GOSPEL.

Argument.

PAPIAS (140 A.D.) places on record a tradition that S. Mark wrote his Gospel as "the interpreter of S. Peter." Is this tradition true? External evidence, subsequent to Papias, merely echoes and embellishes Papias' statement, and adds nothing to our knowledge. If we would solve this problem we must collate evidence from other quarters; e.g., a knowledge of S. Mark's life and character, or evidence derived from the contents of the Gospel itself, may furnish helpful clues.—Biography of S. Mark.—Analysis of S. Mark i.—x.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOURCE OF S. MARK'S GOSPEL.

WHO was the author of S. Mark? The second Gospel itself gives us no clue to its writer. S. John professes to be written by the "beloved disciple" (xxi. 24), and the opening paragraph of S. Luke conveys clear hints of the personality of its author, but, on this point, S. Matthew and S. Mark are absolutely silent. Here, external evidence is our sole authority, but it supplies us with information which may prove valuable.

We know that Papias, who flourished about the middle of the second century, reports as an established tradition of his times that S. Mark wrote his Gospel as "the interpreter of S. Peter." Tradition, in these matters, is often most misleading^a and worse than valueless. We shall, however, see that this notice of Papias admirably suits the character and contents of our second Gospel, and this coincidence in itself forms a strong witness to the accuracy of the primitive tradition.

We have already quoted Papias' statement at length, and need not repeat it here. This most

^a Harnack distinctly says of this very tradition: "This piece of information does not seem reliable. It looks rather like a story that was invented to excuse the deficiencies and omissions of this Gospel." Harnack himself is convinced that S. Mark is based on different strata of oral tradition pure and simple.

important piece of testimony lays stress on five points:—

- (1) Mark wrote as S. Peter's interpreter.
- (2) He recorded S. Peter's reminiscences accurately, but not "in order."
- (3) He was a disciple of S. Peter, but not an original "eye-witness."
- (4) S. Peter framed his teaching to suit his hearers' needs, and "did not give a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses."
- (5) Mark reports S. Peter faithfully and omits nothing.

Now if we bear in mind that Irenæus (180 A.D.) describes Papias as a "man of old time" (i.e. of the primitive days of Christianity), a "hearer of John," and a "companion of Polycarp" (70—155 A.D.), we cannot but recognize in Papias' testimony a most valuable piece of external evidence. Papias himself assures us that he obtained his information from an Elder—personally known to the Apostles—in whom he placed implicit trust. We cannot, therefore, lightly lay aside Papias' very ancient tradition. We shall only be justified in rejecting it if we find that the internal evidence of the Gospel itself does not harmonize with it and consistently bear it out.

On the other hand, however much weight we may attach to tradition, internal evidence must be our one final court of appeal. A tradition may be absolutely genuine and very ancient, but neither its genuineness nor its antiquity guarantees that it is a true

record of actual facts. Tradition crystallizes the opinions, judgments, beliefs of an earlier age. These judgments and beliefs may be accepted or disputed. They represent the views or theories of primitive and uncritical men. The historian must get behind the tradition, if he can, to the evidence and actual facts on which the original tradition is based. He must consider how far the tradition stands the test of intrinsic probability and supplies valuable historical information, or how far it was coloured and influenced from the beginning by the aspirations and prejudices of the day. In the making of tradition, the wish is often unconsciously the father to the thought. Apostolicity, for example, was a potent factor contributing to the acceptance or rejection of a Gospel at the time of its canonisation. Our four Gospels actually owe their inclusion in the Canon of Holy Scripture to their own intrinsic merits, but it is passing strange that, certainly before the end of the second century, the tradition of their Apostolic origin was firmly established, even though we have every reason to believe that in this respect, at any rate, tradition is wrong.

We may therefore accept tradition as a witness, but we must ever remember that it is a witness which repeatedly breaks down under cross-examination, and its unsupported testimony is not worth much. We may go still farther and say that even when it is supported and corroborated by a long string of witnesses, this does not materially add to its value or

credibility. Papias' evidence concerning S. Mark is endorsed by Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Origen, and many other ecclesiastical writers. This proves that the tradition quoted by Papias is genuine and of ancient date, but, in other respects, their corroborative evidence adds nothing to our knowledge. They merely repeat Papias' original statement, with additions or variations of their own. Each improves on his predecessor in the wish to enhance S. Mark's Apostolic value by making S. Peter directly responsible for the second Gospel, e.g. :—

Irenæus echoes Papias' words, and adds, "Mark committed to writing the things preached by Peter."

Clement of Alexandria writes : "The hearers of Peter at Rome desired Mark, the follower of Peter, to leave them a record of Peter's teaching : upon which Mark wrote his Gospel, Peter neither hindering nor urging the undertaking."

Eusebius expands this by saying that "Peter sanctioned Mark's Gospel with his authority."

Jerome goes still further, and tells us that "Peter dictated and Mark wrote." He also informs us that Peter directed that this Gospel should be publicly read in the Churches.

In the face of all this later evidence, it is interesting to note that Irenæus assures us *Mark's Gospel was not written till after S. Peter's death*^b.

^b "Since the decease (ἐξόδου, cf. Luke ix. 31 ; 2 Pet. i. 15) of these (Peter and Paul), Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself

As soon as we turn from external evidence and tradition to the New Testament the first question that naturally suggests itself is this: does the description of the character and personality of S. Mark himself, as portrayed in New Testament pages, throw any light on the vexed question we are considering? Who was this Mark who is said to have acted as S. Peter's interpreter?

The name Mark occurs nine times in the New Testament, viz., Acts xii. 12, 25; xiii. 5, 13; xv. 37; Col. iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24; 1 Peter v. 13^c. In the Acts, he is called John Mark, sometimes simply John. It was to his house that S. Peter went immediately after his delivery from prison (Acts xii. 12). He was evidently a constant visitor there, for the servant, Rhoda, at once "knew Peter's voice, and opened not the gate for gladness." The name of Mark's mother was Mary. She seems to have been a woman of some wealth, for she kept servants, and her house was a large one^d where Christians were wont to assemble.

In Col. iv. 10 we read that Mark was "sister's son to Barnabas" (*ἀνεψίος* = cousin), and immediately on the return of Barnabas and Saul from Jerusalem, before they received their special commission to go

also has handed down to us in writing the things which were preached by Peter." Iren. c. Hær. III. 1. 1. (Westcott.)

^c It is now generally accepted that the Mark mentioned in these nine passages is one and the same.

^d It also had a porch, or covered colonnade, only to be found in rich houses.

to the Gentiles, they "took with them John, whose surname was Mark," as their companion (Acts xii. 25). When Barnabas and Saul were definitely "separated unto God for the work to which He had called them" (Acts xiii. 2) Mark accompanied them on their first missionary journey as their "minister" (ὑπηρέτης), but on their arrival at Perga, he forsook them (xiii. 13) and returned to Jerusalem. On the second missionary journey, "Barnabas determined to take with them John Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other, and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus" (xv. 37—40).

Now from Acts iv. 36, 37 we know that Barnabas was a native of Cyprus, and a Levite. Hence Chase suggests that Mark, Barnabas' cousin, was also a native of Cyprus and a Levite, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, out of all sympathy with the Gentile mission which began at Perga. This he assumes to be the reason why Mark there forsook Paul and Barnabas. It may be so, but it is only a probable conjecture^e.

S. Paul was reconciled to Mark later on, for, some ten years later, during this Apostle's imprisonment in Rome, he speaks of S. Mark as "my fellow-

^e Westcott is inclined to agree with Chrysostom and writes, "Mark left them, being unprepared, as it would seem, for the more arduous work of the mission." cf. Findlay, *Hast. D.B.* III. 704^d, 706^b.

worker," "a great comfort unto me," and "profitable to me for the ministry." He urges the Colossians to receive him kindly, and is anxious to have Mark with him in Rome, for he cannot spare him.

Later still, 1 Peter v. 13 shows us Mark once more associated with S. Peter (who calls him "Marcus my son") at Babylon (i.e. Rome?)^f.

S. Mark was thus intimately acquainted with S. Paul, S. Barnabas, and S. Peter. The expression "Marcus my son" in 1 Peter v. 13 is generally taken to imply that Mark was S. Peter's convert, but some scholars prefer to see in this tender phrase a proof of S. Peter's intimacy with Mark in earlier days. Be this as it may, from youth upwards, S. Mark was in full touch with three of the best exponents of Christianity, a liberal-minded cosmopolitan Paul, a warm-hearted Barnabas, "the son of Consolation," and a Peter who stood half-way between two extreme sections (Acts xv.), and mediated between the opposed schools of thought represented by S. James and S. Paul. S. Mark could hardly have been trained in a better school for his special work of Evangelist.

It is perhaps desirable to note that on each occasion when S. Mark is mentioned he seems to occupy a somewhat subordinate position. In Acts xii. 25

^f From earliest times the common opinion has been that S. Peter speaks here of Rome under the veiled name of Babylon, but Westcott thinks "it is more natural to suppose that Mark accompanied him on an unrecorded Eastern journey."

and xiii. 5 he seems to have acted as "minister" to S. Paul and Barnabas. What the exact meaning of this word (*ὑπηρέτης*) may be it is not easy to define. It is possible, as has been suggested, that he assisted them in his capacity of "catechist." Swete, from S. Paul's words in 2 Tim. iv. 11 ("he is profitable to me for the ministry"—*εἰς διακονίαν*), thinks that S. Mark was rather the travelling companion, i.e. personally serviceable to S. Paul, than his spiritual fellow-worker. Similarly, from the familiar words of Papias, "the interpreter of Peter," "he attended Peter," Swete suggests that he acted merely as Peter's dragoman. If we accept this view, S. Mark was a practical man with a large capacity for being useful, but holding rather a secondary place. Swete may be right, but Westcott and Harnack are probably nearer the truth in expressing a much more favourable opinion of him and his work, and regarding him as an able "minister of the Word."

The incident at Perga, and his readiness shortly after to rejoin the two men whom he had previously forsaken, prove that in early manhood Mark was undecided and impulsive, but, like S. Peter himself, he made ample amends later in life. S. Paul would not have come round to the more lenient view of S. Mark always entertained by Barnabas had Barnabas' judgment not been fully justified. A man who could serve S. Paul and S. Peter equally loyally and be so highly appreciated of both, a Jew of Jerusalem who could write a Gospel to Gentiles, must have been

possessed of many excellent traits, inspired with the true spirit of Christ, and admirably qualified for fulfilling his special task of Evangelist towards the end of a life spent for God and his fellow-men^g.

We are attempting to get behind the tradition quoted by Papias, to establish its truth or falsehood. This we wish to do without overstepping the boundaries of historical research. The question before us is apparently simple: Does Papias' statement represent the actual facts? yet it is a difficult and complex problem, and the answer can only be reached by stages. Our first step is to collect all the available evidence, the next, to discuss the meaning of this evidence, and then we may be in a position to decide the case on its merits.

As a modern writer happily puts it, the historical critic has to play in turn the parts of solicitor, barrister, and judge. In this introductory chapter on S. Mark we are doing the preliminary work of the solicitor, drawing up the case. We have already given the testimony of Papias, and stated all that is historically known of John Mark.

One other source of information still remains, but it is by far the most valuable, and worthy of our serious attention. Our chief witness is

^g Even if Swete is right, and S. Mark was a man of limited individuality and force of character, this is not all our loss. His very lack of originality would even then make him eager faithfully to reproduce S. Peter's reminiscences, omitting nothing.

unquestionably S. Mark's Gospel itself. It is on the internal evidence supplied by the second Gospel that our verdict must ultimately be based. In value and importance this witness stands head and shoulders above all the rest put together. S. Mark's own evidence will more than repay the closest study, and must be subjected to the severest cross-examination. This must be our apology for subjecting our readers to the tyranny of dry and tedious details. The following pages have all the appearance of the dull headings that were to be found in our Bibles twenty years ago. They are summaries of the same type, if somewhat more complete. Clearly the solution of this problem is purely a question of internal evidence. It will, therefore, materially help us to weigh our evidence if we have before us a clear analysis of the main body of S. Mark's Gospel, (the Galilean Ministry section), i.e. the first nine chapters of S. Mark.

Chap. I. The Baptism of Christ by John; the descent of the Holy Spirit; a voice is heard from heaven (1-12). The Temptation (12, 13). The Galilean Ministry begins; Christ preaches the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (14-16). Call of Simon and Andrew, James and John (16-21). Capernaum visited; Christ teaches in its synagogue on the Sabbath, and there heals a demoniac who recognizes in Jesus the Holy One of God (21-27). The people are greatly impressed by this miracle (27-29). Simon's wife's mother healed (29-32). Crowds flock to Christ with their sick, of whom Christ heals many (32-35). Christ seeks solitude, but the people clamour for Him (35-38). Other Galilean towns visited; Christ preaches in their synagogues, and casts out devils (38-40). Healing of the leper, who is straitly charged to tell no man,

but to show himself to the priest and to carry out to the letter all that the Mosaic Law prescribes for his cleansing. The leper so blazes the matter abroad that Christ is importuned everywhere, even in desert places (40—45).

Chap. II. Capernaum again visited; a great crowd assembles, so that no one can “come nigh Christ for the press”; He preaches to them. A paralytic is brought, and his bearers have to break the roof of the house to set him before Christ. Christ forgives him his sins. The scribes are shocked; Christ gently reasons with them, and, in proof of His divine authority, heals the sick man. All are amazed at this miracle, and glorify God (1—13). Crowds follow Christ to the seaside (13). Christ calls Alphæus a tax-gatherer, and dines at his house with other “publicans and sinners,” whereat Scribes and Pharisees murmur. Christ reasons with them (16, 17). The Pharisees ask Christ why His disciples fast not like other religious Jews including John’s. Again Christ reasons with them, and also when they ask why His disciples break the Sabbath by plucking ears of corn.

Chap. III. Christ in a synagogue on the Sabbath; a man with withered hand also present. Pharisees makes this a test case, and watch Christ, resolved to accuse Him if He dare break the Sabbath by healing him. Christ grieved and really angry at their hardness of heart “looks round about on them,” and instantly heals the man. The Pharisees straightway quit the synagogue, take counsel with the Herodians, and henceforth the two combine to destroy Christ (1—6). Christ withdraws to the seaside, great multitudes follow Him there from every quarter of Palestine, “for He had healed many,” and the sick “press on Him for to touch Him.” Christ addresses them from a boat, because of the throng (7—10). Unclean spirits worship Him, crying, Thou art the Son of God. Christ silences them (11, 12). Call of the Twelve that “they might be with Him, and go forth to preach, and heal, and cast out devils” (13—20). Multitudes again collect “so that they could not so much as eat bread” (20). Christ’s friends hear all this, and try “to lay hold on Him: for they said, He is beside Himself” (21). The Jerusalem scribes share this view but go further and

declare: "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth He out devils" (22). Christ's reply to this charge, which He denounces as the sin against the Holy Ghost (21—30). Christ's brethren and mother try to seize Him. Christ's answer to His own question, "Who is My mother, or My brethren?" (31—35).

Chap. IV. Christ teaches great multitudes by the seaside. Parable-of-the-sower sermon (1—9). The Twelve privately ask its meaning. Christ's hard saying about His parabolic teaching. His explanation of this Parable (10—20). Parables of the candle, the seed growing secretly, the grain of mustard-seed, and "many other such parables" (30—34). "Without a parable spake He not unto them; and when they were alone He expounded all things to His disciples" (34). Christ asleep in the sea-storm, which He stills. His disciples afraid and awe-struck at this miracle (35—41).

Chap. V. Graphic word-picture of Gadarene demoniac, who worships Christ and loudly proclaims His Divinity: "Thou Son of the Most High God." Christ heals him. Legion of devils enter herd of swine. Gadarenes thereupon request Christ to depart out of their coasts, which He does (1—17). The cured demoniac begs to accompany Christ, who gently declines, urging him to go and tell his friends what God has done for him (17—20). Crowds await Christ on the other side of the Lake (21). Cure of woman with issue of blood. Jairus' daughter restored to life (22—43).

Chap. VI. Christ teaches in the Nazareth synagogue on Sabbath-day. The Nazarenes, though amazed at His words of wisdom, are "offended at Him." "A Prophet without honour in his own country" (1—4). "He could there do no mighty works." Christ marvels at their unbelief (5, 6). Mission of the Twelve; our Lord's Charge to them; they preach repentance, cast out devils and heal the sick (7—14). Popular opinion of Christ as Elias or a prophet; Herod declares: "It is John, whom I beheaded." Detailed account of John the Baptist's imprisonment and execution by Herod (14—29). Return of the Twelve from their mission. Christ and the disciples retire into the desert because of the constant impor-

tunity of the people, who will give them no "leisure so much as to eat" (30, 31). The crowds "saw them departing and ran afoot out of all the cities and outwent them." Christ, "moved with compassion," teaches the multitudes all day and afterwards miraculously feeds 5,000 (32—44). Christ "constrains" the disciples to cross the Lake to Bethsaida while He remains to pray. A storm arises. Christ sees the Twelve toiling in rowing, and comes to them walking on the sea; He hushes the storm (45—53). The Twelve amazed and awed, and, still unbelieving, because of their hardness of heart (52). Crowds again flock to Christ with their sick (53—56).

Chap. VII. Pharisees and Jerusalem scribes find fault with Christ's disciples for eating with unwashed hands, thus breaking the tradition of the elders, and make a formal complaint on this matter to Christ. Christ openly denounces tradition as making God's Word of none effect (1—10). By way of proof, He appeals to Isaiah and further shows that tradition cancels the Fifth Commandment (10—13). Christ turns to the people present and explains to them that defilement is from within and not from without. This saying He still more fully expounds to the Twelve privately (14—24). Christ withdraws to Tyre and Sidon; cure of the Syro-Phœnician woman's daughter (24—30). Thence He proceeds to Decapolis where He cures a deaf-dumb man. This miracle produces a deep impression.

Chap. VIII. Christ full of compassion for the great multitude who have been with Him three days, and have nothing to eat, feeds the 4,000 on seven loaves, and straightway crosses the Lake (1—10). Pharisees "seek of Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him." Christ sighs deeply and replies, "There shall no sign be given unto this generation," and immediately recrosses the Lake (10—14). In the boat He cautions His disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and the Herodians. They misunderstand and whisper, "It is because we have no bread." Christ reads their thoughts and marvels at their dulness, especially after the recent feeding of the 4,000 (14—21). Cure of blind man, at first partial then complete (22—25). Jesus bids him tell no man (26). At Cæsarea Philippi Christ

asks the Twelve "Whom say men that I am?" They answer, John, or Elias, or a prophet. "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter replies, "Thou art the Christ." Christ charges them to tell no man (27—30). He openly foretells His coming sufferings, rejection, death and Resurrection on the third day. S. Peter, incredulous, rebukes Christ. Christ sees in Peter's words a temptation of Satan, and sternly rebukes Peter (31—34). Christ teaches the people and disciples the meaning of "Take up thy cross, and follow Me." He also refers to His Second Coming.

Chap. IX. Christ's declaration that some present shall not taste death till they see God's Kingdom come with power. The Transfiguration six days after, where Elias and Moses appear. Peter's bewildered exclamation. The voice from heaven. Christ charges them to tell no man till after His Resurrection. "They question one with another what the rising from the dead means." They ask Jesus why the scribes say Elias must first come. Christ endorses the saying explaining it, and also proves from Scripture His own death and rejection. He adds that Elias has already come (1—13). Christ rejoins the other disciples, and finds them in a crowd, with scribes questioning them. Christ asks the scribes the reason of the questioning. Thereupon a father brings to Christ his son possessed of a powerfully evil spirit whom the disciples had tried to cure and failed. Christ's deep sympathy. The father's appeal; Christ's gentle rebuke of his half-faith elicits a whole-hearted confession of faith from the broken-hearted father. Full and touching account of the cure. In answer to His disciple's question, Christ explains the cause of their failure (14—29). Secretly passing through Galilee, Christ again foretells His Passion and Resurrection on the third day. "His disciples understood not, and were afraid to ask Him" (30—32). Christ at Capernaum asks His disciples why they disputed by the way. "They held their peace, for they had disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest" (in Christ's Kingdom). Christ sets a little child in their midst as an object-lesson (33—38). Christ's teaching on toleration in religion; "he that is not against us is on our part" (38—41). Christ's

teaching on the danger of any course of action or conduct which leads self or others into temptation or sin (41—50).

[The Galilean Ministry ends here. Chap. X. begins : “ And He arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judæa, by the further side of Jordan.” Henceforth the scene is transferred to Judæa and Jerusalem.]

We have now collected our evidence ; its interpretation will form the subject of our next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

IS S. MARK THE INTERPRETER OF
S. PETER? ·

Argument.

THE internal evidence of S. Mark does not seem, at first sight, to support the Papias tradition. In a Petrine Gospel we should expect a strong spiritual element, whereas S. Mark is apparently a fragmentary, anecdotal, myth-loving, unspiritual chronicle. In favour of the traditional view, much stress is usually laid on S. Mark's special references to S. Peter, but this argument is utterly inconclusive. If we wish to establish S. Mark's Petrine origin, we must found our plea on a broader basis. We must show, to begin with, that S. Mark is *not* unspiritual, nor anecdotal merely, nor more myth-loving than his contemporaries (Apostles included). Two main reasons why the charge of "unspirituality" utterly breaks down; (1) S. Mark is essentially spiritual; (2) Spirituality was not his real aim. Written Gospel-records, like oral tradition, were intended to supplement Apostolic "preaching," not to supersede it. The earliest Gospels are records of facts, not declarations of faith. They lay the foundation on which the spiritual edifice is to be built.

CHAPTER XIV.

IS S. MARK THE INTERPRETER OF S. PETER?

IN the preceding chapter the attempt has been made to collect and set forth the evidence external and internal, which has any serious claim to give historical information as to the truth or falsehood of the early tradition that S. Mark wrote his Gospel as S. Peter's interpreter. The next step is to weigh, interpret and apply this evidence, to consider what inferences may logically be drawn from it. In other words, do the actual facts before us warrant the conviction that S. Mark gives us such a presentation of the Life and Ministry of our Lord as we should expect to find in a Gospel-story inspired by S. Peter and crystallizing his reminiscences?

At first sight, one is strongly disposed to answer No. A review of the evidence leaves a first impression that tradition is wrong, and that Papias' statement does *not* cover the facts.

True, everything in S. Mark suggests a very early date for his Gospel. Its freshness of colouring, its life-like portraiture, its simple terse style, above all, the complete humanity of its Christ, the dulness of heart of the Twelve, make this early date clear. As we read S. Mark's simple, direct, living narrative we

instinctively feel that it is drawn from life. We are listening to the words of an eye-witness. The narrator is in such close touch with his subject, so rapt in it, that his facts speak for themselves without any comment of his own. S. Mark is without doubt the work of a Christian of the first generation, a uniquely valuable contribution to our data for the Life of Christ, but it does *not* at first sight look like "S. Peter's work." (See Tertull. c. Marc. iv. 5.)

The main features we should *a priori* expect to find in a gospel inspired by S. Peter, judging from his recorded speeches^a, would be precisely those which are lacking in our S. Mark. We naturally fancy he would have laid great stress on our Lord's Crucifixion and Resurrection, on the fulfilment of prophecy in the Person of Christ^a, on His definite teaching, e.g. the Sermon on the Mount and the more important of the longer discourses. We expect none but words of a deeply spiritual import in a S. Peter, the intimate friend, servant and herald of Christ the Messiah, Saviour and Judge of the world.

Therefore, with Papias' words, "Mark is Peter's interpreter," ringing in our ears, we open S. Mark's pages looking for what we have been taught to regard as the saving and vital truths of our Christian Faith. To our surprise they are not there. The doctrine

^a Crucifixion, e.g. Acts ii. 23, iii. 18, cf. iv. 28; Resurrection and exaltation, e.g. v. 30, 31, iv. 10, ii. 24, 32, 33, 36, iii. 13, 15, 21, x. 40, cf. iv. 2; Prophecy, iii. 18, 24, x. 43; Remission of sins, ii. 38, iii. 19, 26, v. 31.

of the Atonement is only hinted at once, in three words, and these are of questionable interpretation; while the glorious truths of the Resurrection are conspicuous by their absence.

We are disappointed. In a Petrine Gospel we expected a S. Peter to speak to us words of life that would penetrate into the innermost depths of our hearts, to kindle within us the fire that burned in his own soul, and what do we actually find in S. Mark? Apparently, a mere series of more or less disconnected biographical anecdotes, an abundance of miracles, and little or no spiritual teaching at all. His pages read like so many chapters of a myth-loving chronicler who revels in the miraculous. It is one endless repetition of the same refrain: "they brought unto Him all that were diseased out of every city, and He healed them," or "the multitude thronged Him, so that He had not leisure so much as to eat, because of the miracles which He did^b."

The miraculous healing of the sick and the casting out of devils,—these are the "mighty works" which impress Mark, just as, according to him, they impressed the crowds. Even when S. Mark reports the mission of the Twelve, what he emphasizes as its main result is: "they cast out devils and healed the sick." In fact, he assures us that this was one

^b But we shall see that S. Peter does lay stress on our Lord's miracles, "works" or "signs," e.g. Acts ii. 22, x. 38, cf. iv. 10 and 30.

of the essential reasons of their call and ordination (iii. 15).

As already hinted, we need not look for definite teaching in S. Mark; it is not there. In the whole Gospel, there are only five parables,—the Sower, the lighted candle, the seed growing secretly, the grain of mustard-seed, the wicked husbandmen. There is not a single one of our Lord's longer discourses,—if we except the prediction of the Second Coming in chapter xiii., which is clearly derived from an independent source not used elsewhere by S. Mark. There are a number of our Lord's sayings in S. Mark, but they are mostly short, abrupt, conversational, of a polemical rather than religious type. Even our Lord's Prayer is omitted. Our Lord's disputes with the scribes, five parables, and some conversations with the disciples are the only hints in Mark of any systematic spiritual teaching on the part of our Lord.

On these grounds, the critical reader is at the outset naturally tempted to question the historicity of the Papias tradition, to suspect that it has no foundation in fact, though probably uttered in all good faith. We know that Papias was not infallible. Thus he reports as an established tradition of his times that the Apostle S. Matthew had written an Aramaic Gospel containing the sayings of our Lord. This Gospel he apparently identifies with our S. Matthew, and here he is decidedly mistaken. At the best, tradition and external evidence are frail reeds to lean on. If we

relied on them, we ought to ascribe S. Luke's Gospel to S. Paul, for its Pauline origin has even stronger external evidence in its favour than S. Mark's. Eusebius expressly refers S. Paul's words "according to my Gospel" (2 Tim. ii. 8) to S. Luke's Gospel, and this view was generally accepted^c.

In his preface to "Luke the Physician," Harnack writes: "Let me now express my absolute conviction that historical criticism teaches us ever more clearly that many traditional positions are untenable and must give place to new and startling discoveries." This caution the seeker after truth cannot possibly take too much to heart.

We have seen that Papias is by no means infallible, yet he is our sole authority for our tradition about S. Mark. All ecclesiastical writers after him quote it on his authority. More than this, the writings of Papias no longer exist. We have only extracts from his writings as quoted by Eusebius and Irenæus. Therefore, this early tradition reaches us in the form of a quotation of a quotation. It is only Eusebius' version of a passage in Papias reporting some information that Papias had learnt from hearsay. It is probable that it is a genuine remnant of correct tradition. No doubt the Elder who was Papias' informant did tell him that "Mark was Peter's interpreter," but this need not have meant that Mark acted as Peter's interpreter *in writing his Gospel*.

^c cf. Iren. c. Hær. III. i. i. "Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel which he (Paul) used to preach."

We have every reason to believe that S. Peter almost invariably spoke Aramaic and was a poor Greek scholar^d, requiring an interpreter in his mission-work to Greeks. S. Mark, after accompanying S. Paul up to the time of Paul's death, may well have rejoined S. Peter, the intimate friend of his youth,—the New Testament tells us that he did,—and acted as his interpreter in his mission-sermons, thus becoming still more familiar with his teaching and preaching.

Of course, we are not now in a position to get behind Papias' statement to the actual words of Presbyter (John?) on which it is based. Papias may have reported them perfectly correctly. In any case, his evidence is a valuable clue, but there is always the bare possibility that Papias' interpretation of the Presbyter's words may be wrong, and this is a consideration that must be taken into our reckoning. Harnack openly rejects the tradition. "This piece of information," he writes, "does not seem reliable: it looks rather like a story that was invented for the purpose of excusing the deficiencies and omissions of this gospel." It savours of presumption, verging on impertinence, to question

^d Even if 1 Pet. is S. Peter's, 1 Pet. v. 12 openly states that S. Peter did not write it himself, but employed Silvanus to do it for him. At the same time, Silvanus may only have been Peter's amanuensis, and it is only fair to add that many eminent scholars deny this allegation of S. Peter's ignorance of Greek: see esp. Chase, Hastings' D.B. III. 787a.

^e "Luke the Physician," p. 160.

Harnack's judgment, but there is reason to believe that he is wrong here. At the same time, we must take Papias' statement with caution, or it may prejudice and mislead us at the outset. If we unreservedly adopt his tradition, and start with the conviction that S. Peter was behind our Mark, we shall readily find Petrine touches in Mark's Gospel which we should otherwise never have detected, which may not be there at all.

For instance, with Papias' suggestion of Mark's Petrine origin simmering in their minds, modern theologians have collated all the passages referring to Peter himself in this Gospel, and thereby proved to their own satisfaction that all Mark's information about S. Peter can have but one source, Peter himself. There is no denying that Mark's Gospel is extremely Petrine in this respect. Peter's call, Peter's confession, the message of the risen Christ to Peter, these are the great turning-points in Mark's Gospel-story. Such incidents as the cure of Peter's mother, or the statement that Peter's home was at Capernaum (i. 30 sqq.) would most naturally come from Peter himself. We find still clearer indications of first-hand knowledge (derived from one like S. Peter) in those instances where Peter is expressly named though there is no special reason for the mention of his name (e.g. S. Mark i. 36; ix. 5; xi. 20—26; xiv. 54). It may also be noted that in the three scenes where Peter, James and John alone were present,—the raising of Jairus' daughter, the Transfiguration, and the Agony,—S. Mark's

picture in each case is so much more graphic than S. Matthew's or S. Luke's, that the natural temptation is to ascribe his fuller knowledge to S. Peter's prompting.

On the other hand, if this were the sole point at issue, most critics would be ready to hold the same brief for S. Matthew and S. Luke. It would be comparatively easy to draw up a strong case proving that their information about S. Peter was at least as complete as S. Mark's.

Few scholars are now prepared to deny the fact that Matthew and Luke had our Mark, or its equivalent, before them at the time of writing their Gospels. It therefore follows that they had a perfect knowledge of all his facts. Their own Gospels prove that the first and third Evangelists made the fullest use, not only of the matter, but even of the words of S. Mark, whenever it suited their purpose. If they did not avail themselves of his information about S. Peter, it was for reasons of their own. It was there at their disposal.

There is more than this. It would be possible to defend the position that S. Mark really knew less of S. Peter than S. Matthew or S. Luke. Matthew alone notes our Lord's blessing pronounced on S. Peter, his walking on the sea, and Peter's special connection with the tribute-money, while Luke refers to our Lord's special prayer for S. Peter (S. Matth. xiv. 29; xvi. 17—19; xvii. 24—27; S. Luke xxii. 31, 32).

True, from Eusebius onwards, the very omission of

these striking facts in S. Mark respecting S. Peter has been urged as one of the strongest pleas of its Petrine origin. Peter's natural humility and self-effacement in matters honourable to himself would instinctively prompt him to make no reference to them. This plea is undoubtedly strong, but the argument from silence must not be pressed too far. S. Peter's self-effacement is by no means consistently carried out even in S. Mark. Besides, there is nothing specially honourable in S. Peter's faith failing as he walked on the sea, nor in his connection with the tribute-money.

We have seen that great stress is also laid by the advocates of the Petrine origin of S. Mark on those passages in which S. Mark names S. Peter without any special reason for the mention of his name. Here again the argument breaks down. Precisely the same thing occurs in S. Matthew and S. Luke.

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| e.g. | { | S. Matth. xv. 15 : "Then answered <i>Peter</i> , |
| declare unto us this parable." | | |
| S. Mark vii. 17 : " <i>His disciples</i> asked Him | | |
| concerning this parable." | | |
| | { | S. Luke xxii. 8 : "He sent <i>Peter</i> and John, |
| saying, prepare us the Passover." | | |
| | { | S. Mark xiv. 13 : "He sendeth forth <i>two</i> of |
| His disciples," &c. | | |
| cf. | { | S. Matth. xxvi. 75 ; S. Luke xxii. 62 : |
| "Peter went out and wept <i>bitterly</i> ." | | |
| | { | S. Mark xiv. 72 : "When Peter thought, |
| thereon, he wept." | | |

If we see in the occasional mention of S. Peter's name in S. Mark a proof of immediate personal knowledge derived from Peter himself, then, by parity of reasoning, the same plea holds good of the other two Evangelists.

We shall be accused of special-pleading, and rightly so, but it is done of set purpose. We do not deny S. Mark's Petrine origin. Personally we are convinced that the majority of modern critics are right in accepting the substantial truth of Papias' tradition. All the evidence seems to point in that direction. No doubt S. Mark developed the original material derived from S. Peter. He also had other sources of information (e.g. chap. xiii.). The fact remains, none the less, that the Petrine reminiscences form the nucleus of his Gospel, as we hope to be in a position to show later.

Our sole contention is that, if we are to establish Mark's Petrine origin, it must be on a broad basis. External evidence by itself, without corroboration, will not do; neither will any number of special references to S. Peter or scattered incidents in the second Gospel. If our plea is to be consistent, logical, and convincing, it must be framed on sound principles. External evidence is helpful, but we cannot cross-examine Papias, we must take his words on trust. Allusions in S. Mark to S. Peter are also valuable, but we have seen that such evidence is very inconclusive. Our witnesses must come into court not only with

a good character for trustworthiness, but ready to submit to cross-examination. The only witness we can call who will meet all our requirements and really supply the testimony we want is S. Mark himself. The whole problem under discussion resolves itself purely and simply into a question of internal evidence. We must let the Petrine origin of S. Mark stand or fall on its own merits, and pass our verdict on the evidence which the contents of the second Gospel, taken as one consistent whole, may be able to supply.

On reviewing this internal evidence, our first feeling is one of disappointment. We have already characterized S. Mark as an anecdotal and more or less legendary biography, full of vivid touches, pleasing in its simplicity and freshness, but lacking in spirituality and unity of purpose; while the scientific historian would view it in the light of a document which lies at the opposite pole to our modern conception of what constitutes history.

Curtailed, fragmentary, unspiritual S. Mark—this is the all but unanimous verdict of ancient as of modern times. S. Augustine can only speak of Mark as the “copyist and epitomizer of Matthew.” We have seen that at one period this Gospel was so little valued that only one mutilated copy of it was extant. The ecclesiastical writers of early days did not consider it worth their while to write a commentary on S. Mark, and even now few except scholars value it as highly as the other Gospels.

Men are now awakening to a sense of the injustice of this verdict. A closer study of S. Mark has revealed the fact that this disparagement of the second Gospel is due to a total misconception of its aim and scope. It is now realized that it is not a mere series of disjointed anecdotes, for there is a deep underlying unity of purpose running through it all. Far from being unspiritual, Mark is nothing if not spiritual. He preaches Christ as no other Evangelist does. True, he does not deal in theology, he does something better: he lets the facts speak for themselves, without comment of his own. Unhistorical he certainly is not. On the contrary, he is now our one main authority for the reconstruction of the times and the Life of the Christ. If we ever do get back to the Christ of history, it will have to be through Mark. So completely has the verdict on Mark been reversed that even his chronology is recognized as superior to that of any of the other Evangelists. In this matter, the statement of Papias' informant, "Mark did not record the facts *in order*," is so untrue and inapplicable to *our* Mark, that it has been made a basis for denying that our second Gospel was the Mark's Gospel to which the Presbyter referred.

In all this, we are anticipating, giving our conclusions before stating our premises. The grounds on which these statements are based will form the subject of the next chapter.

¹ οὐ μέντοι τάξει τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ χριστοῦ ἢ λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα.

Before we examine S. Mark's Gospel *from within*, there is one other consideration which claims our attention and should be discussed here. It involves a long and tedious digression, but it is inevitable, for it will throw a strong side-light on our problem.

S. Mark has been severely criticized for his omission of our Lord's definite teaching, in a word, for his unspirituality. We have already partially answered this charge in our suggestion that his Gospel is altogether spiritual, but the charge can be rebutted on quite other grounds. This indictment of S. Mark overlooks the causes which gave rise to the production of written Gospels, the conditions of Christendom at the time of their composition, the temporary needs which called Gospels into existence.

It may be advisable here, even at the risk of tedious repetition, to summarise in a few lines the stages through which the first generation of Christians passed in their evolution of a Gospel-literature.

(a) At first, the only Bible of the Christian Church was the Old Testament. It was interpreted Christologically.

(b) The oral preaching and teaching of the Apostles formed the New Testament of the primitive Church.

(c) The Apostles not only "preached Christ" as the Messiah, Saviour, and Judge of mankind; they also "catechized," that is to say, carefully taught converts the historical facts of our Lord's Life.

(*d*) The three subjects of all-absorbing interest to primitive Christians were these :—

- (1) What does the Bible, i.e. the Old Testament, prophesy of Christ?
- (2) The "Sayings of Jesus."
- (3) The "Life of Christ."

In course of time, as Apostles and trained teachers gained experience, the catechizing would become more complete and systematic, and the raw material of oral tradition would naturally group itself under these three headings.

(*e*) Still later, the rapid spread of Christianity would necessitate a further development. Men began to ask for written documents embodying this oral tradition. Naturally, these written Gospels would also in the first instance assume the same three forms: (1) collections of Old Testament prophecies pointing to Christ; (2) collections of the "sayings of Jesus"; (3) "Lives of Christ⁸."

(*f*) Christians of the first generation fully expected Christ's return in Glory in their own lifetime. This expectation rendered superfluous the composition of any but occasional writings serving the immediate need of the present.

If we bear (*c*) (*d*) (*e*) well in mind, we shall see

⁸ The "Gospel or *Logia* of Matthew" is an example of (2); S. Mark of (3); of (1) no clear trace survives, but that such a "collection of O.T. prophecies" once existed is now established almost beyond a doubt. See Burkitt, "Gospel Transmission," p. 126.

that the earliest Gospel - literature would not be "spiritual" in the strict sense of the word. This was not its aim or scope at all. It reproduced one side of the Apostolic "Ministry of the Word," and not the spiritual side.

The Apostles, we have seen, were both preachers and catechists. *As preachers* of Christ, they prepared men for the speedy coming of the Lord Jesus : they proclaimed Him as Messiah, Saviour, and Judge : they focussed men's gaze on the risen and eternal Christ. (Acts ii. 36.) *As catechists*, they carefully taught converts all the historic facts concerning Christ which were essential to a right understanding of the saving truths they proclaimed. (Acts v. 42 ; ii. 42.)

The teaching and preaching from the very first went hand in hand, and dovetailed one into the other. The catechizing laid the foundations, and in the sermons and Epistles we have the superstructure, the spiritual edifice built thereon. As teachers, the Apostles told the story of the Life of Christ exactly as He lived it here on earth ; as preachers, they interpreted that Life in terms of the Godhead.

Naturally, all the interest centred in the crowning facts of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, while the earlier Ministry of the Lord was regarded mainly as leading up to this final issue. In other words, the Apostles were much more concerned with Christ as God than with the facts of His earthly life. The Resurrection convincingly proved Him to be God,

and the Resurrection is the cardinal truth, the crowning event, the victory which these Apostolic preachers proclaim. But this victory was the issue of a long battle, or, rather, of a long campaign. Every single incident not only in the Life of Christ Himself, but in what had gone before it, contributed to this final triumph. The knowledge of the previous Life of Christ, and of the Old Dispensation paving the way for Him, was an essential factor to a right understanding of the Resurrection.

The Apostles knew this and acted upon it. The *Acts of the Apostles* proves that the historic facts of the life of Christ formed the essential groundwork of the faith preached. Westcott has clearly shown, for example, that in S. Peter's short address to Cornelius, summarised in ten verses by S. Luke (Acts x. 34—43), we have a short "Life of Christ" and the outline of a creed. "S. Peter marks the date of Christ's appearance ('*after the baptism which John preached*'), the place from which He came and the inauguration of His work ('*how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power*'), the geographical point from which His Ministry began and the extent to which it spread ('*throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee*'), the signs by which His Presence was attended ('*who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil*'), the different localities in which His mighty works were shown ('*in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem*'), His

Crucifixion ('*whom they slew and hanged on a tree*'), His Resurrection and after-appearances ('*Him God raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly, not to all people, but to chosen witnesses, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead*'), His great charge ('*and He commanded us to preach unto the people*'), His Coming to Judgment ('*it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead*'), the fulfilment of scripture ('*To Him give all the prophets witness*')^h."

The last words of the *Acts* tell us the same thing of S. Paul, i.e. he was both a preacher and a catechist. It was in his capacity of catechist, as well as preacher, that for "two whole years Paul dwelt in his own hired house, and received all that came unto him, *preaching* the Kingdom of God and *teaching* those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Acts* xxviii. 30, 31).

Now in the earliest Gospel-literature we have the teaching, and not the preaching of the Apostles, the raw material which was worked up into the sermons and Epistles of the Apostles and other evangelist preachers. It may not have the spiritual interest, the converting power, the soul-stirring energy of a S. Paul's Epistles or a S. John's Gospel, this was not its aim,—but a S. Paul or a S. John could not have done their work without this raw material. These early gospels were records

^h "Study of the Gospels," p. 176.

of facts, not declarations of faith. They supplied the stones without which the spiritual edifice could never have been built. Thus it is no disparagement to an early gospel-record that it is not a spiritual Pauline Epistle.

At the outset, the "collections of Old Testament prophecies," the "collections of sayings of Jesus" and the "brief Lives of Christ" were merely written and regarded as "aids to faith." The first generation of Christians were daily, hourly expecting the return of their Lord in Glory to receive them unto Himself as sharers in His Kingdom. Apostles and converts alike were straining their eyes eagerly awaiting the dawning of the glorious "day of the Lord." They were convinced that, in their own lifetime, "the same Jesus, taken up from them into Heaven, should so come in like manner as they had seen Him go into Heaven." The time was very short. Little heed need be taken of the distant future. Enough for them to supply the pressing needs of the moment. Their one duty was to watch and be ready, to prepare for this all but immediate Coming of their King. Such a conviction may build up saintly lives, but it is not conducive to the writing of books. This was the age that created for itself the earliest Christian literature. Can we wonder that this literature only took the form of letters, and the briefest of gospel-records? Short as the time was before the Day dawned, Epistles had to be written by a S. Paul to warn, encourage or edify Christians

at a distance. Until the Lord came, it was an aid to faith to open the Scriptures and read them in the light of the collected prophecies, to ponder over the "Sayings of the Lord," and the chief events of His Life, for comfort and guidance.

As time went on, year after year, and Apostles and other brethren "fell asleep," it began to dawn even on the first generation of Christians that Christ tarried and might not return in their own lifetime¹. The Christian outlook began to widen. The immediate future no longer absorbed all their interest. They gaze less heavenward, and turn their eyes more to the claims which life here has on them, their social responsibilities, the organization of the Church and its future welfare. The earthly Life of Jesus is of living interest to them now, not merely viewed in its relation to His speedy return, but because they want to have the Image of Jesus before their eyes as their Pattern. They would see how He walked here on earth so that they may follow in His steps. They wish to hear His very words, not only as a guarantee for their heavenly hopes, but as a guide in their daily conduct here in this world.

Thus, even in the first generation of Christians, events moved rapidly. S. Paul's Epistles prove

¹ e.g. Findlay thinks that, at the time of writing 2 Cor. iv. 16- v. 10, "for the first time S. Paul realises that he will die before the Lord's Return. We do not find him subsequently speaking of the *παρουσία* in the 1st pers. plur. of 1 Thess. and 1 Cor." (Hastings' D.B. III. 711b.)

what a change had taken place in his own views in fifteen or twenty years. This change of outlook is reflected in the Christian literature of the day. Occasional writings to serve the immediate needs of the present no longer suffice. Men now ask for more. In our Gospels we have a new kind of literature adapted to this wider outlook. We no longer get letters, or mere brief collections of prophecies or of sayings, mere summaries. They are not occasional writings at all, but real literary works attempting, as S. Luke tells us in his preface, to set forth the Life and Ministry of our Lord "in order" in complete form. The authors take their subject seriously. They take pains to collect, choose and arrange their material. They produce a literature,—books, in fact,—addressed not to one particular Church but to all Christians, narratives which are not mere creations of the moment, but of a more or less permanent character. Their writers may not have had this intention of writing for all peoples and all times in their minds at the time, but they wrote, none the less, better than they knew.

Our S. Mark is the connecting link between the old and the new. He represents the transition stage between the earliest phase of primitive Christian thought and its later development, and overlaps them both. A close study of his Gospel, written towards the end of his life, about 65 A.D., reveals the strange fact that in his views S. Mark is still in sympathy with the Christianity of 40—50 A.D.

For years he has been the companion of liberal-minded S. Paul, with him he has seen many lands, and his horizon has certainly broadened since the day that he forsook Paul at Perga. He, a Jew, can now write a Gospel intended for Gentiles. True; yet to the end he remains a Jew of Jerusalem, the disciple of Peter, "Marcus, my son."

We are not yet saying that S. Mark's Gospel is Petrine. This still remains to be proved. But, whether Mark reproduces S. Peter's reminiscences or not, its internal evidence shows that it belongs in matter, style, and tone to a very early date, a very early cycle of oral tradition. It stands at one end of the scale just as S. John at the other, and in the four Gospel-narratives we can clearly trace the early Christian spirit in the normal course of its natural development, ever striving towards clearer expression. And if the close study of our Gospels teaches one fact more clearly than another, it is that the Christianity of the first generation took far less interest in theology than its immediate successors. It was far more concerned with correct conduct than correct doctrine. The preaching of Apostles in very early days laid stress on the Messiahship of Jesus and His speedy Coming, but it cared very little for dogmatic theology^k.

S. Mark reflects this outlook. His Gospel is history, yet more than history. He narrates his-

^k This is admirably illustrated by Chase in his article on S. Peter, Hastings' D.B. III. 767a, cf. Headlam, *ibid.* I. 33a.

torical facts, not for their own sake, but rather as a means to an end, to prove that Jesus is the Son of God. Doctrine he eschews.

It is only later that we have the ecclesiastical colouring of a "S. Matthew," or the spiritual and theological interpretations of a "S. John." S. Mark is content with a simple, direct, living picture of the Person, character and life of the Man Jesus, a Portrait of the Christ just as the eye-witnesses saw Him, a simple tale told in such a way that the facts speak for themselves. He gives us the bare words of Christ, the bare events of His Life. The narrator is still in such close touch with the earthly Christ and the Jewish background of His day that the colouring of Palestine stands out clearly. At times, we see Jesus Himself stirred by the feelings and emotions of His complete humanity. We breathe the very atmosphere of the day and enter fully into its religious prejudices and love of the marvellous. We share the awe of the crowds, the narrowness of the scribes, the questionings and dulness of the Twelve. But we have not caught the true spirit of the age if we look for a developed Christology, or any religious phraseology in S. Mark. Even the well-known passage, which so many theologians treasure above all else in Mark: "The Son of Man came to give His Life a ransom for many¹," seems out of place in this Gospel.

¹ But see Burkitt in "Transactions of the International Congress for the History of Religions," Vol. II., pp. 321—328.

The objection may be urged : What of S. Paul's theology? Is it not systematic, dogmatic, fully developed by 50 A.D.?

This is a fair criticism, but there are two answers to it. (1) S. Paul, like S. John, was a man of a peculiar temperament, history and genius ; one of those men met only once in a lifetime. It would be a grievous mistake to regard him as typical of the Christians of his day. He was a creative genius, metaphysician and theologian, a thinker of extraordinary spiritual and psychological insight. He rose to heights and lived in an atmosphere far too ethereal for most of his Christian contemporaries, and, even now, none but kindred souls can follow him. Most people to-day endorse the happy phrase and subtle irony of 2 Peter iii. 15, 16 : "As our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him, has written . . . in his Epistles . . . in which are some things hard to be understood." S. Mark and S. Luke were companions and disciples of S. Paul, yet their writings prove that neither of them had the power to gaze into the heart and mind of the author of the Epistles to the Galatians and Corinthians. Their Paulinism is extremely superficial. Their theology moves in a lower sphere far removed from the soaring heights and profound depths of Pauline "soteriology" with his difficult doctrines of the problem of sin, the theory of Redemption, the dialectics of Justification by Faith, and the mysteries of the Atonement on the Cross. The majority of early Christians would

have sympathized with S. Luke and S. Mark. S. Paul struck a note too high for them.

(2) We must also remember that S. Paul was addressing intellectual Greeks who revelled in dialectical subtleties, while the Palestinian Jewish mind was of a totally different type. The average religious Jew was strongly moral, essentially practical, somewhat deficient in depth, and of such was the Christian Church of the Synoptic Gospels. The Church of Palestine was still very much at home in Jewish systems of religious thought. In fact, Christianity in Palestine was a sect of Judaism. A S. James and a S. Peter, as Acts x. 9—16, xv., and Gal. ii. show, were still very strict Jews, adhering to the Mosaic Law, differing only in this from other Jews, that they believed in the Messiahship and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. To such practical, common-sense, and somewhat narrow Jewish Christians, neither the Pauline dialectics nor Pauline liberalism would appeal in the very least; if anything, it would repel them. The plain teaching of a S. Peter, the practical morality of a S. James, the simple Gospel-story of a S. Mark were more within their grasp and to their liking than the deep theological conceptions of a S. Paul, which pierce to the very depths of the moral consciousness and enter into the mysteries of the Divine Counsel. Indeed, even S. Paul's own Greek Churches seem to have found him too deep for them. Harnack notes the curious fact that, even in Gentile Churches,

S. Paul and Paulinism were very soon overshadowed by the most Jewish of the Synoptic Gospels, S. Matthew. "The gospel which in contents and bias is farthest removed from the Hellenic spirit,—the gospel which in its every trait bears witness to its origin from Jerusalem—was soon seized upon by the Greeks themselves as the gospel most to their mind."

This, then, is our answer to the charge of "unspirituality" brought against S. Mark: (*a*) It is not true. He is essentially spiritual, only he preaches Christ by letting his facts speak for themselves without comment. (*b*) Spiritual teaching was not his aim. He represents one side of the Apostolic "ministry of the word," the catechizing and not the preaching section of it. (*c*) The first generation of Christians cared more for correct conduct than correct doctrine. (*d*) It is no disparagement or defect of S. Mark that he does not copy or reflect Pauline theology.

In the next chapter we shall endeavour to define the real aim and scope of S. Mark's Gospel.

CHAPTER XV.

S. MARK'S OWN WITNESS TO ITS
PETRINE ORIGIN.

Argument.

IF S. Mark is not unspiritual, neither is he merely anecdotal. The leading ideas in S. Mark, viz. (1) Christ the Strong Son of God; (2) Christ's love and tender compassion; (3) Christ's impatience with ecclesiastical conventionalism;—prove that there is a definite unity of purpose pervading his Gospel. But if Mark's Christ is perfect God, He is also perfect Man, with waves of human feeling passing through His soul.—Clear traces in S. Mark of a development (1) in our Lord's teaching; (2) in the disciples; (3) in Jewish hostility to Him, but no development in our Lord's consciousness of His Mission.—Realistic style of S. Mark.—Great historical value of S. Mark's—S. Mark's miracles; their credibility.—Is S. Mark the "interpreter of S. Peter" in this Gospel? Where, when, and for whom this second Gospel was composed.

CHAPTER XV.

S. MARK'S OWN WITNESS TO ITS PETRINE ORIGIN.

EACH Evangelist writes his gospel-narrative from his own standpoint and perspective. It is no valid criticism to say that others might have treated the subject differently, or that a Mark and a "John" do not deal with it as truly or historically as a Luke or a "Matthew." This begs the whole question. No two men see, or can see, the Son of God from the same point of view. As well might we expect two independent artists to approach and give us the same rendering of the Alps or any other overwhelming panorama. Each has the same immense theme before him, and gives us his partial view of it. Each is struck by some leading lines which specially appeal to him, and he moulds his picture accordingly, yet their partial views of the large reality may in each case be true to life.

Thus it is that our four Evangelists represent the God-Man Jesus from four points of view. The opening sentence of each of the four Gospels corresponds with the standpoint from which the Evangelists survey that life. S. Matthew's genealogy prepares us for the Child of promise and prophecy, the heir of David. S. Luke's preface indicates his

intention of giving us a strictly historical narrative preserving the order of events and addressed to Gentiles. S. John's prologue strikes the note of the Divine Glory of Christ from all eternity with its first words: "In the beginning was the Word."

Similarly, the whole of the second Gospel is but an expansion of the title in the first verse: "Jesus Christ, the Son of God." We shall soon see that he develops this leading idea by sketching in bold outline a Christ majestic in His power and sympathy, a Christ in action.

Over S. Mark's Gospel might be inscribed as its motto the first line of Tennyson's "In Memoriam": "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love."

(1) *Christ, the strong Son of God*, strong to draw men to Himself, strong to subdue the spirit of evil, strong to comfort and to heal, strong to make nature obey Him.

Carlyle has well said: "There is in man an inborn spirit of Hero-worship: a quite indestructible reverence for whatever is strong and holds of Heaven. He instinctively bows before the Higher, and in reverently bowing does he feel himself exalted." If man thus admires power, even when it is but the counterfeit of the true strong soul that "holds of Heaven," we are prepared for the attractive power of the strong Son of God as seen in Mark's Gospel. Wherever Christ goes, He is the magnet of the human soul. "All men seek for Thee" (i. 37). At

His bare word : "Come ye after Me" (i. 17), Simon and Andrew, James and John, straightway forsake all and follow Him. At His rebuke and command : "Hold thy peace, and come out of him" (i. 25), the evil spirit obeys at once, so that all are amazed, saying : "What new thing is this ? for with authority commandeth He even unclean spirits, and they do obey Him." Simon's wife's mother is sick of a fever ; Christ comes, "takes her by the hand, and lifts her up, and immediately the fever leaves her, and she ministers unto them" (i. 31).

With a master's hand, and with a few rapid bold lines, Mark sketches a complete outline-Portrait of the strong Son of God. In that one opening chapter, we already see the Christ as S. Mark sees Him "mighty in word and deed." A Christ strong in His readiness to abase Himself and accept baptism at the hands of one who confesses he is not worthy to unloose His shoes (i. 7—10); strong in His victory over Himself in the hour of Temptation (13); strong in His magnetic power to draw men to Himself, whether individuals (17—20) or whole masses (37); strong to cast out the power of evil (23—25); strong in word : "He taught as one that had authority, and not as the scribes" (22); strong in His power to heal (30 sqq.; 34; 40 sqq.). In this first chapter the outline is already complete ; all that the rest of the Gospel does is to fill in the details.

Throughout, at every turn in S. Mark, Christ is

ever the "strong Son of God." This is his leading idea, the total impression Christ has made upon him personally. It is surely more than a coincidence that, in S. Mark iv. 36—v., we have three successive tempests quelled at Christ's strong word. The storm of nature on the Lake, the storm in the demoniac's soul, the storm of sorrow in a bereaved home, hear Him say: "Peace be still," and there is a great calm.

(2) *Christ's Immortal Love.* If S. Mark is the Gospel of Strength, it is the strength of a Heart ever full of love and tender compassion. A leper comes to Christ, "beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, *moved with compassion*, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean^a." Or see the Love that makes His heart go out to publicans and sinners (ii. 15—18); note how it grieves and hurts His tender feelings to witness the hard-heartedness that will not even let Him succour a man in his affliction for fear of breaking the Sabbath-day (iii. 5). Note, too, the exquisite tenderness of our Lord which makes Him not only raise Jairus' daughter to life, but, remembering the little girl's weakness after her recent illness, also prompts Him to see that "something be given her to eat" (v. 43).

^a None but a Jew can understand what that touch of Love meant to the unclean leper. It meant more than the cure itself.

S. Mark's Portrait of the Christ is the picture of the Son of God moving among men with power, but also with a heart intensely tender and human. He is moved with compassion for the crowds starving in body and soul (vi. 34 sqq.). His disciples are "in the midst of the sea, and Christ alone on the land *praying*," yet "He sees them toiling in rowing," breaks off His prayer and comes to them, walking on the sea (vi. 48). Note His love for the rich young ruler (x. 21), His appreciation of the loving heart of the woman who was a sinner (xiv. 9), above all, His love of little children (ix. 36 ; x. 14).

This is the Christ of Mark. Is it a mere coincidence that it is also exactly the Christ of S. Peter? After all, what is Mark's "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love," but an expansion of Peter's theme: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power ; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil : for God was with Him" ?

One other leading idea pervades Mark's Gospel^b :

(3) *Christ's impatience with Jewish ecclesiastical conventionalism.*

At the outset of the Ministry the attitude of scribes and Pharisees toward our Lord seems to have been more or less friendly, and He certainly dealt gently with them. He was loyal to all their religious insti-

^b It naturally flows from (2), for religious conventionalism must needs stunt and choke all warmth of heart in our relation to God or man.

tutions. He invariably enters their synagogues on the Sabbath-day and teaches there, both in Capernaum (i. 21) and in all the other towns throughout Galilee (i. 39). He straitly charges the leper after his cure to speak to no man by the way, but at once to "show himself to the priest and offer for his cleansing those things which Moses commanded" (i. 44).

Very soon, however, the scribes and Pharisees begin to be suspicious of our Lord. They know not what to think of Him. Throughout Israel there was a general feeling that the Day of the Lord was at hand. John had been preaching the speedy Coming of Messiah, and had borne witness that Christ was He. Everyone knew this. The scribes and Pharisees were convinced He was not Messiah, but He might be a prophet, as the populace fully believed. They watched Him closely, and their perplexity increased. He acted in such a strangely unconventional manner. Already, in the second chapter of S. Mark, we read of Him doing two things which would conflict entirely with Jewish religious prejudices. He (1) claims power to forgive sins, thus shocking the Pharisees by assuming prerogatives encroaching upon the honour of God; and He (2) associates with publicans and sinners, outcasts whom Pharisees regarded as loathsome to God and defiling to man. Worse still, in the eyes of scribes and Pharisees, was another feature in our Lord's conduct. Although Jesus outwardly professes

to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy, yet, in actual practice, He is constantly breaking the Sabbath by working cures, and encourages His disciples to copy His example (iii. 6 ; ii. 23). This is done, not in secret, but openly, nay in the very House of God, and He actually dares to justify His conduct by asserting that "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

Christ is equally revolutionary in His method of dealing with the sacred traditions of the elders. In practice, He daily sets tradition at nought by associating with publicans and sinners and ignoring fasting. He goes much further still, for He deliberately denounces all traditions as irreligious, demoralising, and contrary to the whole spirit of the Bible (vii.).

He makes little or no distinction between Jew and Gentile, but defies Jewish religious public opinion in this matter. He goes to the people of Tyre and Sidon, or the half-heathen population on the other side of Jordan, and there heals their sick and casts out devils just as if these Gentiles were Jews.

To crown all, Christ makes personal attacks on the recognized leaders of Judaism, the upholders of its religion. He tells chief-priests, scribes, and elders to their face that they are false teachers and traitors to their God (xii. 1 sqq.). He warns His disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees (viii. 15). He forces even a scribe to own that the whole "Law and the Prophets" are contained, not in what scribes and Pharisees

traditionally teach, but in simple love to God and to our neighbour, which is worth more than any amount of burnt-offerings and sacrifices (xii. 28—34). Finally, He condemns the whole scribal system in a scathing analysis of their character (xii. 38).

Such is the Portrait Mark draws us of the Christ, a Christ strong, loving, unconventional.—strong with the superhuman energy of a hidden force that works from within outwards and manifests itself in character, word, and deed. But it is a strength guided by the loving Heart of One Who is tender and compassionate as a woman. It is a strength, too, that is weary of all the littlenesses of which the world is so full, the littlenesses of custom which cramp the soul's freedom, the littlenesses of those who seem to themselves and others to rule, while they are the slaves of the petty routine which robs the moral and spiritual life of all its vitality and worth.

But the Christ of Mark is not only "The strong Son of God, Immortal Love," He is a Christ Who is also intensely and completely human, deeply stirred by feeling and emotion. We have already seen how constantly our Lord was moved with compassion, but there is much more than this. "He looked round about *with anger*, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts" (iii. 5). "He *marvelled*, because of their unbelief" (vi. 6). "He was *much displeased*," because little children were kept from

Him (x. 14). "He is *sore amazed*, and *very heavy*, and His *soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death*" (xiv. 33, 34). "He *sighed deeply* in the spirit" (viii. 12; cf. vii. 34). He is so wearied that He sleeps in an open boat in a great storm at sea (iv. 38). He is keenly touched by others' kindness to Himself or their trust in Him (xiv. 9; vii. 29; i. 40, 41). And there is that most intensely human cry of all on the Cross: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (xv. 34).

Thus the Christ in Mark is perfect God but perfect Man as well. At times, He walks among men as if He were God in Heaven. At other times He acts and speaks as though He were a mere Man, earth His home, and His powers bounded by our own limitations. Thus, of the last day, He implies that He knows no more than we do: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, *neither the Son*, but the Father only" (xiii. 32). Under certain circumstances His power of healing varies, and depends for its success on the co-operation of the patients themselves. Occasionally the cures are only partial at first (viii. 24, 25), and, on one occasion, at least, "He could there do no mighty works" (vi. 5; cf. i. 32).

So faithful is S. Mark in his portraiture of Christ that he goes so far as to record an event and an impression which the other Evangelists have refused to repeat: "And when His friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on Him, for they said, *He is beside Himself.*"

Thus Mark's Portrait of the Christ is inspired by a conviction of the love, the strength, the glory of "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," but it is a plain, straightforward, sober account of the actual Christ.

Unity of Purpose in S. Mark. Enough has been said in the preceding sections to show that Mark's Gospel is not a "series of disconnected anecdotes." To say that there is no unity of purpose in Mark is utterly to misunderstand his aim and scope. Throughout, his history is written as a means to an end, to prove that Jesus Christ *is* the Son of God.

This was S. Mark's leading motive in the composition of his Gospel-story, but he had also two subsidiary themes which he wanted to develope, viz. (1) How came it that Messiah died at the hands of His own Chosen People? (2) What is the history of the origin of the Christian Church? Hence the stress Mark lays on our Lord's feud with scribes and Pharisees, on His call and training of the Twelve.

Development of the plot in S. Mark. The question has often been asked: Can we trace in S. Mark a development in the Consciousness of Jesus, a development in the disciples, a development in our Lord's relations with the scribes and Pharisees? Modern theology wants to make good this development in S. Mark's pages, but is it really there?

On this point the critic is bound to speak with some diffidence. There is a considerable substratum

of truth in Schweitzer's remark that modern theology is apt to read too much between the lines of our Gospels, artificially to fill up gaps in them and supplement their silence by a free use of purely speculative conjecture to suit our own presuppositions.

At the same time, we very much question whether an impartial reader who approaches Mark critically as a whole, and comes to it with an open mind, as if reading the story for the first time, will quite agree with Schweitzer. S. Mark's account of our Lord's Galilean Ministry does seem to subdivide Christ's public life into two or three great epochs which clearly reveal a historical development in the Ministry itself and its external circumstances.

Of a development in our Lord's own consciousness of His Divine Mission we believe that S. Mark knows nothing, and hints at nothing of the kind, though many scholars persist in seeing clear traces of this Jesus development in the second Gospel. Their idea is that, even before His Baptism, our Lord was in a sense conscious of His Messiahship, but it was the opening of the heavens, the descent of the Holy Spirit, the voice from Heaven as He was coming out of the water that confirmed this inner conviction and converted it into an absolute certainty. Then follows the Temptation which, in S. Mark, parabolically represents a terrible struggle in our Lord's own soul as He weighs the various courses open to Him if He would persuade the

Jews of His Messiahship and win their loyal allegiance. At first, say these critics, our Lord started with a conception of the Messianic kingdom more or less in harmony with current Jewish eschatological expectations. It was only after His rejection by the religious leaders of His nation He realized that the Day of the Lord had already dawned here on earth, that the Kingdom of Heaven had already begun to be established in the hearts of His disciples, and that, for its advancement, it was necessary for Him to suffer and to die.

Now this may fairly represent the various stages through which our Lord raised His disciples to the true view of His Messiahship; but it certainly does not represent the evolution of the idea in His own Consciousness. From the outset, according to S. Mark, our Lord knew positively that He was the Son of God; He equally knew that His Kingdom was a spiritual one, and that only through suffering and the portal of Death could He ascend to the Throne of His Glory. Already in ii. 20 He declares that "the day will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from His disciples," and He openly prophesies that it will be a day of mourning.

The idea of an Apocalyptic earthly Messiah was in the disciples' minds and in the hearts of the multitudes, never in Christ's own consciousness (cf. vi. 45—47; with S. Matth. xiv. 23, 24, and S. John vi. 15). Christ's full realization of His Mission and all it involved was already perfectly clear to Him

at His Temptation. There He faced the whole situation calmly in all its bearings, and once and for all mapped out His course. Four times, at least, did the suggestion come to Him to adopt another course, to follow a line of less resistance, to fall in with current popular eschatological views, viz. (1) at the Temptation; (2) after feeding the 5,000; (3) after S. Peter's confession; (4) again at the Agony. On each occasion He brushed this suggestion aside without a moment's hesitation. Throughout, from start to finish, He knew what awaited Him, and never swerved a hair's-breadth from the course He had mapped out till all was accomplished.

There is an undoubted development in Christ's proclamation of His Messiahship, but this is quite another matter. At the outset, our Lord was absolutely reticent on the subject. A public declaration of the Messiahship would have defeated its own ends, for it would only have raised earthly hopes which our Lord did not share or wish to encourage in any way^c. S. John the Baptist had more than hinted at Christ's Messiahship, but neither he himself nor others realised the full meaning of his testimony to Christ's Personality. According to Mark, the very devils in the demoniacs proclaimed the fact from the very first (i. 24, 34; iii. 11; v. 7). Christ instantly silenced them. "He suffered not

^c S. John, at all times a shrewd interpreter of our Lord's actions, distinctly supplies us with a telling piece of evidence to this effect in S. John iv. 1—3; cf. vi. 14, 15.

the devils to speak, because they knew Him." Still the disciples and others did not understand. Our Lord, already in ii. 5, had claimed God's own prerogative of the power to forgive sin. Even this does not open the disciples' eyes. Everyone was convinced that our Lord was a heaven-sent messenger of God, the Elias who was to pave the way for Messiah, or, at any rate, one of the prophets. **More they knew not.**

It is not till after many a day that at last, at Cæsarea Philippi, S. Peter guesses our Lord's secret, and even then the disciples only half understand. Over and over again, after Peter's great confession, does our Lord expressly and emphatically tell them in so many words that Messiah must suffer, be rejected of men, that He must die, be buried in the grave, and rise again, ascending the throne of His Glory through the gates of Death. On every single occasion they misunderstand Him, so worldly are they, so slow of understanding, so steeped in Jewish Messiah-expectations. As the time of His decease drew near, our Lord reiterated these warnings again and again: e.g. after the Transfiguration, and immediately before the last visit to Jerusalem (ix. 9, 31); "but they understood not these sayings, and were afraid to ask Him."

A miraculous and sudden Coming of their King in Glory as Messiah to reign on earth in their own lifetime, with themselves next to Him in His Kingdom (ix. 34), this was what the disciples expected.

When Christ tries to disillusion their minds and assures them that it is as a suffering, not a conquering Messiah He is here, "Peter takes Him and begins to rebuke Him." Believe this they will not. Is it any wonder that after His death the empty tomb is inexplicable to His followers? "they trembled and were amazed, for they were sore afraid." Is it any wonder that even when the Resurrection has convinced them that their Lord is God and King, they still consider His Mission incomplete, and look for His speedy Return in the clouds of Heaven to establish His Kingdom here on earth?

A development in our Lord's teaching is apparent in other ways as well. Till the day of His final breach with scribes and Pharisees, He had taught in the synagogues, and proclaimed the Kingdom of God to the multitudes and disciples alike. From Chapter iii. onward, our Lord still preaches to the multitudes in the wilderness and by the lake-side, but it is on the instruction and organization of the Twelve that He now mainly concentrates His attention. It is then that He calls, ordains and sends this chosen band of Twelve on their first Mission. He knows it is on them He has to depend for the nucleus of His Church and the carrying on of His work when He, the Bridegroom, is taken away. He takes immense pains with their training. Constantly does He retire with His disciples into desert places to be alone with them, away from the importunity of the crowds (vi. 31). It is

when they are alone that the Twelve ask Him to explain His teaching (iv. 10), and "He expounds all things to His disciples" (iv. 34).

Thus we can clearly trace in Mark a development in the teaching of our Lord, a development in the disciples, a development in the hostility of the scribes and Pharisees,—but in Christ Himself there is not a hint of any development at all. S. Mark has no conception of such a thing.

Style of S. Mark. Was S. Mark a literary artist? Does his work look like the bare reproduction either of oral tradition or other Apostolic teaching, exactly as the material reached him? or can we say that the Second Gospel bears clear traces of conscious preparatory labour in the collection, choice and arrangement of the material? A great deal hangs on our answer to this question,—the Petrine origin of S. Mark among other points. The question whether S. Mark gives us the reminiscences of S. Peter is one that we cannot answer till we have brought to a focus all the scattered rays in S. Mark that help to throw light upon it,—and in S. Mark's style we have one of these side-lights.

On S. Luke's showing, S. Mark is to be ranked among the pioneers in the field of gospel-story writing (Luke i. 1—4), and as may be expected in all pioneer-work, the results appear somewhat rude and inartistic. S. Mark suffers from the necessity of having had to compose his work at

a time when there were no models before him of the appropriate form into which the history of our Lord's Ministry should be cast. He had to mould an appropriate form for himself as best he could. He is very far from being a literary artist like S. Luke. His vocabulary is extremely limited, his composition rude, yet, although he wrote with no eye to artistic effect, his work is a gem of simple art.

With no preliminary introduction of genealogy, preface or prologue, he goes straight to the heart of his subject, "beginning from the baptism of John." As if expanding S. Peter's theme in Acts x. 34—39, he throws on his canvas scene after scene right up to the Resurrection morning, and never lets our interest flag. The spectator sees the whole drama acted before his eyes, the majestic Figure "going about doing good," the impressed multitudes crowding around Him, the scowling scribes and Pharisees, the Twelve so dull of understanding and questioning among themselves in petty ambition, the outcasts and sinners irresistibly attracted to their compassionate Friend. We see it all as disciples, scribes and crowds saw it then. We have the same facts before us as they had, and we are left to draw, as they did, our inferences of the Christ.

Mark is thus very far from being the mere chronicler of anecdotes some critics see in him. True, there is none of the studied and artificial grouping of facts as in Matthew, no loud profession of chronological order as in Luke, none of the

meditative reflection of a John, and certainly nothing of the systematic theology of a Paul. S. Mark never meant that there should be. He just wants us to see the Portrait of the Christ he himself so clearly sees, and with a few bold yet simple strokes he gives it us in all the glow and energy of life.

Perhaps no words can describe Mark's graphic portraiture better than Lowell's appreciation of Carlyle: "He is great in single figures and striking episodes, but wants gradation and continuity. He sees history as it were by flashes of lightning. A single scene, a single figure is minutely photographed. Every tree and stone, almost every blade of grass, the attitude or expression of a principal figure, the gestures of a momentary passion, everything leaps into vision under that sudden glare."

These words might have been expressly written of S. Mark. The narrative is so full of these vivid pictorial touches, the details which drop from his pen are so life-like, the liveliness of his language is often so dramatic, while the central Figure which towers above all is so majestic, that the more we read S. Mark the more we come under the spell of his realism. He tells us a story of the long-forgotten past, and it springs into life before our very eyes. We hear the actual words of the poor leper speaking with beating heart: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." We see the epileptic boy, who wallows groaning and foaming at the mouth, and the father appealing to Christ

with tears in his eyes. No other Gospel equals S. Mark in exquisite word-pictures (e.g. S. Mark v. 2 sqq.; ii. 2 sqq.; vi. 39, 40; x. 17 sqq., 46 sqq., &c., &c.).

Historicity of S. Mark. S. Luke—as Harnack shows—“does not express an altogether favourable opinion of his predecessors—we may even say that he wrote his Gospel to supplant the Gospel of S. Mark, which he condemns as wrong in its order of events, too unspiritual, and imperfect and incorrect” (“Luke the Physician,” 158). Many modern students and scientific historians side with S. Luke and do not place Mark, his companion and fellow Evangelist, very high on their list. They regard him more in the light of a credulous chronicler than a sober historian. Modern scientific criticism is more and more reversing this verdict. It is coming round to the conviction that Mark is a historian of the first importance both in the amount and the kind of material supplied. The life-like portraiture and fresh colouring can have come from none but an eye-witness, and the contents of the narrative are in themselves so intrinsically probable.

We do not say that it is all exact and accurate history, free from all trace of legend, for this would not be true. S. Mark at times treats his subject with considerable freedom, and it reaches us coloured with the writer's personality and limitations. He revels in the miraculous. But precisely because of these apparent defects, Mark's pages reflect

and breathe the spirit of his age. Let them contain what inaccuracies they may, they are a truer picture of the period than any modern historian with all his researches could present to us.

We believe it is no exaggeration to say that the simple, direct, vivid narrative of S. Mark fits in so perfectly with the atmosphere of Christ's day, and with the actual sequence of events, that, in spite of Luke's criticism, Mark brings us far nearer the Christ of history than any of the other Evangelists.

Miracles in S. Mark. The historical value of S. Mark has been questioned on the plea of the exaggerated importance he attaches to miracles. But why attack S. Mark specially? Every gospel-writer is full of miracles, and not least the so-called historical S. Luke. So is the *Acts*, so are S. Paul's Epistles. The Apostles and the primitive Church fully believed in miracles. In 1 Cor. xii. S. Paul includes miracles in his list of spiritual gifts: "to one is given the gifts of healing: to another, the working of miracles," and he looks upon them as being on the same level with the gifts of wisdom or of knowledge or of preaching. S. Paul himself, on one occasion, is reported to have restored to life a young man called Eutychus who had been "taken up dead," though S. Paul seems to correct this statement by assuring those present that they need not be alarmed for "his life is in him" (*Acts* xx. 8 sqq.). Of one fact we may be sure, that the writers of the New

Testament were convinced that miracles happened. They assure us not only that Christ Himself worked miracles, but that ordinary Christians constantly did so too.

Modern scientists and historians, on the other hand, equally emphatically assure us that miracles do not occur and never did happen. On this point we shall have more to say in a separate chapter^d. For the present, enough to say that scientific critics themselves are more and more coming round to the view that it is unscientific in the last degree for us to dogmatise on the subject without the exact data before us. We are not in possession of all the evidence we should require to pass impartial judgment. Even if we believe, as we do, that there is exaggeration of statement in many of the miraculous episodes of the New Testament, we remember that we are being taught strange psychological facts to-day which make us pause before we deny the *apparent* breaches of Nature's Laws, which we call miracles.

We are beginning to realize the immense power of telepathy, the subtle psychic force exercised by mind upon mind, spirit over spirit. Smile superciliously as we will at Faith Healing and much of its charlatanism, we are not quite certain, any of us, that there is not much more method in its madness than we care to own. The enormous latent power of Consciousness or Personality, the power

^d See Appendix.

of telepathy and suggestion, are psychological forces which we are now only just beginning to gauge, forces which will have to be taken very much into our reckoning in the immediate future if we would interpret every-day phenomena.

If in Christ we have to deal with an abnormal Personality, — what then? We may rationalize many of the miracles, relegate many more to the limbo of legend, but, after due allowance made for exaggeration and human error, an irreducible residuum remains which we cannot eliminate, even though we refuse to accept it on the plea that we cannot explain it. But, is it truly scientific to reject as an exploded fiction in past history whatever does not fit in with our own theory of life and nature? We should rather call it, in our present state of half-knowledge, the height of un-science. There can be a scientific dogmatism which is just as unscientific and untrue as the religious superstition or bigotry it condemns.

Conclusion. The charges brought against S. Mark, from the days of S. Luke onward, on the score of his incompleteness and anecdotalism, his unspirituality and love of the miraculous, break down at every point. We have seen that there is nothing if not a clear unity of purpose running through the whole of his Gospel. S. Mark gives us no definite teaching because there is no place for theology in his clear scheme, yet he preaches Christ as no other

Evangelist does. Far from not being "in order," as S. Luke hints, S. Mark is the most correct of the Gospels in its chronological arrangement; while the miraculous element is not only in the spirit of the age, but may be more real and true to fact than we have hitherto been ready to concede.

It is a remarkable testimony to the authenticity and reliability of Mark's historical facts that Luke, his critic, and "Matthew," writing some twenty years later, can find no better course to adopt in composing their own narratives than to incorporate S. Mark bodily. Thus do they set their seal to the truthfulness of his history, and the soundness of his judgment in the collection, choice and arrangement of his material.

All the evidence tends to prove that S. Mark either follows authentic Apostolic tradition of a very early date, or obtained his information at first-hand from a most reliable eye-witness or eye-witnesses. The freshness of the colouring, the wondrous force and originality of the ideas, the simplicity of style, the Aramaic tinge, the absence of religious phraseology, the life-like portraiture of the principal characters, one and all bear record to an eye-witness of the first generation of Christians. This eye-witness is, moreover, in close touch with the Person of our Lord, the points of view and interests which prompted His actions, the forces which influenced His career. There is nothing in the contents of this Gospel conflicting with the tradition that S. Mark embodies the reminiscences of

S. Peter, indeed, the general trend of the internal evidence is in perfect harmony with this view. On the strength of the first chapter alone, a very strong case could be made for Mark's Petrine inspiration. It cannot be a mere accidental coincidence that Mark begins his Galilean Ministry with full details of Peter's call, Peter's birth-place, Peter's home, the cure of Peter's wife's mother. It is also remarkable that in this chapter, as nowhere else, he gives us an extraordinarily complete account of the incidents of one single day, and that day the most eventful in Peter's life, the details of which would most naturally be deeply impressed on his mind.

On the other hand, if the material is in the main supplied by S. Peter, or one like S. Peter, S. Mark has so assimilated, developed, recast it, added to it, that he has wholly transfigured the raw material furnished by S. Peter. Papias spoke more truly than he knew when he said S. Mark was Peter's interpreter. The reminiscences may be Peter's, but their interpretation is all Mark's own, and probably as like, yet unlike, the original as a play of Shakespeare is to the historical passage in Hollinshed on which it is based.

It was S. Peter who put the first touch to Mark's education. It was S. Peter who catechized "Marcus, my son," devoting much time and care to the Christian training of his beloved young friend, giving him all his reminiscences of our Lord's Life and Ministry. It was Peter again, many years later, at the end of

his life, who gave S. Mark's education its finishing touches as well, when they were together "in the Church that is at Babylon" (1 Peter v. 13). S. Peter's influence was undoubtedly the first, the last, and in every way the supreme influence in S. Mark's life. At the same time, we must remember with Harnack that Mark had gone through other experiences as well. "Why," asks Harnack, "should a native of Jerusalem, whose maternal home had formed the centre for the primitive Church, and who knew the whole community, the fellow-worker for many years of Barnabas and Paul, have taken S. Peter's reminiscences exclusively as the basis of his Gospel?"

From the nature of the problem, this is a question to which no positive answer can be given. The intrinsic probability is that in our S. Mark we have the reminiscences of S. Peter as supplying the whole foundation and most of the stones of S. Mark's superstructure. But S. Mark has travelled far in body and mind since the days in which S. Peter told him the story of Jesus' Life. He has heard much, and thought still more in the interval. His experience and outlook have broadened. The Christian Church and its needs have also changed greatly meanwhile. His finished work bears clear traces of all these influences. It is impossible now to eliminate these other factors, to lay one's finger on this passage or that and say: this is S. Peter's contribution, or, this we owe to his interpreter S. Mark.

Place of writing. We do not know. Tradition points to Rome, and nothing in S. Mark contradicts this view, while there is much in the internal evidence to confirm it. At any rate, there is more to be said for Rome than for Chrysostom's belief that this Gospel was composed at Alexandria.

For what class of readers was Mark intended? Here again we have few facts to go upon. All we can safely say is that it was originally addressed to readers who knew Alexander and Rufus (xv. 21), for their names are brought in without any apparent reason. We know that Rufus dwelt at Rome (Rom. xvi. 13). It was clearly intended mainly for Gentiles. This conclusion "follows from the explanation of Jewish customs (ii. 18; vii. 1—4; xiv. 12; xv. 6), opinions (xii. 18), localities (xiii. 3), no less than from the general character of the Gospel" (Westcott).

One point, however, is clear. It was not written for Christians of any particular school of theological thought. It is a calm, sober statement of fact so presented as to suit all the world alike. There is in it no ulterior partisan purpose of any kind. The inconsistent and self-contradictory statements of critics, who try to find a theological bias in S. Mark, prove this fact convincingly. Thus Baur affirms that S. Mark's Gospel was intended to present the case for the intermediate section of Christians standing half-way between Judaizers and Paulinists. Hilgenfield holds that it leans towards Petrinism; Volkman,

towards Paulinism, and so forth. When these various critics can thus readily detect leanings in all directions, it is a clear proof that Mark had no special leanings at all. As a matter of fact, we have already seen that his subject and aim relieved him from all necessity of burdening his simplicity of doctrine with any dogmatic theology whatever.

Date. The absence of any clear reference to the Fall of Jerusalem supports the conclusion of a very early date elsewhere advocated in this chapter. Irenæus places the date at 63 A.D., and is probably not far wrong. It lies somewhere between 63—69 A.D., in all likelihood.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUTLINE-SKETCH OF S. LUKE
AND HIS GOSPEL.

Argument.

HARNACK'S re-establishment of S. Luke as the author of the Acts and also of the third Gospel, or "former treatise," thus endorsing the unanimous verdict of early tradition from 140 A.D.—Biography of S. Luke, the companion and "beloved physician" of S. Paul, and his fellow-worker, but not an eye-witness of the Ministry. —S. Luke's is the Gospel (*a*) of Humanity and (*b*) of universal forgiveness. (*c*) It assigns a prominent place to women; (*d*) leans towards the poor; (*e*) is full of song and rejoicing; (*f*) and the work of a poet-painter.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUTLINE-SKETCH OF S. LUKE AND HIS GOSPEL.

THE Preface to S. Luke's Gospel tells us that it was composed by its author to supply the "most excellent Theophilus" with a full and reliable account of the historical facts of the Faith in which Theophilus had already been instructed. Now, if we turn to Acts i., we find a similar preface: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up." Naturally, this implies that the third Gospel and the Acts are two consecutive volumes by one and the same hand, the Gospel being the first instalment, and the Acts the second part of this historical work. From earliest days, tradition has endorsed this view, and unanimously ascribed both books to S. Luke.

Till quite recently, however, by far the greater number of competent critics maintained that in this matter tradition was all wrong. Both the third Gospel and the Acts are anonymous works, and, although these critics were ready to admit that the Gospel might possibly be the composition of a com-

panion of S. Paul, they absolutely refused to follow tradition and accept S. Luke as the author of the Acts. They insisted that there were historical blunders and endless other features in the Acts, which made it inconceivable that the author of this book was a companion of S. Paul, or a man who lived in the Apostolic age: the internal evidence clearly showed that he belonged to a later generation. He was, so they maintained^a, a man of culture living towards the end of the first century, who had set himself the task of showing how Christianity had spread itself over the world, from Jerusalem to Rome. He had collected a vast amount of material for this purpose, but such a considerable period of time separated him from the events he records, that he was personally quite out of touch with the condition of things in Apostolic days, and had to depend entirely on documents and late tradition for his facts. Therefore, although he professes to give us a picture of the primitive Apostolic Church and the actual words and speeches of S. Peter, S. Paul, and other heroes of the first generation, the results are meagre and colourless; artificial to a degree. There are, doubtless, fragments of genuine speeches, and one original document of the first rank,—a short contemporary travel-diary—in the Acts, but as a whole, the *Acts*, on the face of it, bears clear traces of the lack of

^a The whole of this paragraph expresses the views of these adverse critics, not our own.—J. R. C.

accurate and detailed information. Historical reminiscences may probably lie in the background, but it is no longer possible to sift the wheat from the chaff, to disentangle the historical facts from the accretions and embellishments of late oral tradition and legend.

One school of critics included the third Gospel in the same category as the Acts, the other did not. The former recognized in the Acts and Gospel combined a great historical work, of unique character, a historical document of the first importance for our knowledge of the conditions and ideas of the time (end of the first century) when it was composed, but of no great historical value for the Apostolic period it professed to portray. It was the work of one hand,—not Luke's,—and crystallized tradition at a time when oral tradition had degenerated and become more or less legendary and idealized. The third Gospel they regarded as the more trustworthy of the two books, simply because the oral tradition relating to Christ was more fixed and stereotyped, less liable to any great modifications. It was otherwise with the second part (Acts) dealing with the primitive Church and the spread of Christianity. Here tradition was more fluid, less trustworthy, and therefore the record does not tally so closely with the reality.

The other school of critics compromised with the traditional view of a Lukan authorship. They accepted the common opinion that the Gospel proceeded from

S. Luke's pen, while they rejected the Acts as a palpable "literary forgery."

Harnack, in his "Luke the Physician," has dealt these theories a deadly blow, and convincingly proved that tradition is right in assigning a Lukan authorship both to the third Gospel and the Acts. He bases his arguments on the well-known "we" sections of the Acts.

Certain sections in the Acts, viz. Acts xvi. 10—17 ; xx. 5—15 ; xxi. 1—18 ; xxvii.-xxviii. 16, use the first personal pronoun "we." This "we" first appears in xvi. 10, replacing the "they" of the previous verses and chapters : " *We* endeavoured to go into Macedonia."

In these "we" sections, as already stated, German and other critics see the private diary-notes of some companion of S. Paul. These notes the editor of the Acts has bodily incorporated in his work.

Why, then, did the editor leave the "we" sections in the first person, thus giving the reader the definite impression that the writer of the Acts was himself S. Paul's companion? To this question the answer of these critics is twofold. (1) The author retains the "we," simply because it already existed in a document which he wishes to embody in his narrative in its original form. (2) It was a literary artifice constantly employed in those days. We find a parallel to it in the pseudonymity of several Old Testament books. This literary device is as characteristic of the literature of the period as the

practice (e.g. in Thucydides and Acts^b) of introducing fictitious speeches, in which the author's own words were placed in the mouth of his characters. The dramatic impersonation was palpable, and deceived nobody.

It is against such theories as these, and in defence of the Lukan authorship both of the Gospel and the Acts, that Harnack has entered the field and firmly re-established the truth of the early traditional views. Others before him had taken up the brief for the defence, both in Germany and England. It wanted, however, a Harnack's comprehensive knowledge, open mind and balanced judgment to marshal the evidence on both sides, and impartially sift and weigh the actual facts. He has now placed the whole case before us in such a clear dry light that there can be but one verdict on the point at issue.

On literary and historical grounds Harnack has proved up to the hilt that the "we" sections are the work of a companion of S. Paul, and an eye-witness who is no other than Luke "the beloved physician." He has also convincingly shown that the rest of the Acts and the third Gospel are by the same hand. This is self-evident from the style, vocabulary, and internal evidence generally.

It is impossible for us to compress into a few lines the arguments of Harnack, but the cogency of his plea will be patent to anyone who takes the trouble

^b cf. Macchiavelli, Grotius, and Bacon (II. VII.) in more modern days.

to study his scholarly treatment of facts. His analysis of the vocabulary and style of the "we" sections, the Gospel, and the rest of the Acts; his searching cross-examination of their internal evidence; the chain of evidence he forges link by link to prove that the author of the Acts and Gospel must have been a physician,—form a masterpiece of historical criticism^c.

It may therefore now be regarded as established beyond the possibility of a doubt that the traditional view of the authorship of the third Gospel and the Acts is right. They are the work of "Luke, the beloved physician," an eye-witness of S. Paul's doings, his companion during a portion of his mis-

^c Harnack's argument may be briefly put thus: (1) Tradition, as early as 140 A.D., assigns the third Gospel and Acts to S. Luke. The following facts support tradition: (*a*) S. Luke was a Greek, a physician, and a fellow-traveller of S. Paul, so was the author of the Acts; (*b*) no mention of S. Luke is made in the Acts. (2) Linguistic evidence proves that (*a*) the writer of the "we" sections in the Acts wrote the whole book; (*b*) was a physician; (*c*) and also composed the third Gospel. (3) The author's historical inaccuracies and his un-Pauline theology "do not show that the Acts cannot have been written by a fellow-worker with S. Paul." S. Paul's companionship did not confer upon his companion infallibility of insight into Paul's character and doctrine, or absolute veracity and a perfect memory; neither did it eliminate Luke's individuality. S. Luke obtained his information from others besides S. Paul.—As to the Gospel, Harnack believes S. Luke wrote his Gospel in Achaia or Asia Minor (Ephesus?) about 80 A.D., basing it mainly on S. Mark, but interpolating Palestinian traditions of a legendary character. The feminine and Samaritan elements in S. Luke's writings were derived, so Harnack thinks, from Philip the Evangelist and his daughters, while the songs in the Gospel and the speeches in the Acts are S. Luke's own composition.

sionary journeys. These two treatises together are therefore of unique value as emanating from a man of culture who had every opportunity of obtaining first-hand information.

Harnack's re-establishment of S. Luke as the author of the Acts is also valuable in another way, which concerns us more closely here. If "the former treatise" refers to S. Luke's Gospel, as it clearly does, this establishes an early date for the composition of the Gospel. In its turn, the early date of S. Luke's Gospel involves a still earlier date for the Gospel of S. Mark embodied in it. We thus indirectly obtain a remarkable corroboration of the conclusion arrived at in our last chapter.

In dealing with S. Luke, we shall proceed on the same lines as with S. Mark. We shall begin with the external evidence, following it up with a short biography of S. Luke and a brief sketch of the leading ideas of his Gospel, and finally draw such conclusions from our premises as the internal evidence may justify.

(1) *External evidence.* The common consent of ecclesiastical tradition, ascribing the third Gospel to S. Luke as its author, can be traced back to the middle of the second century. Before that date, the Gospel is not mentioned by name. We have, however, clear proof that our Greek Gospel of Luke existed before Marcion's day (about 140 A.D.). We have already seen that Marcion

was a pronounced Paulinist, and a confirmed anti-Jewish Christian. He is generally accounted a heretic because he openly rejected all that did not fit in with his views. S. Paul's Epistles were His Bible, and Luke his Gospel, but he would only accept the third Gospel partially, omitting 309 verses. For a long time, critics were disposed to invert the relationship of Luke and Marcion, alleging that Luke had expanded Marcion, not Marcion mutilated Luke. Dr. Sanday, however, has convincingly proved that S. Luke was the first in point of time. This position he has established on precisely the same kind of reasoning as that whereby Harnack has proved the Lukan authorship of the Gospel and the Acts.

Our S. Luke Gospel was fully recognized in Tatian's day (circ. 160—170 A.D.), for it is to be found in his *Diatessaron*, or "Harmony" of the four Gospels, practically in the exact text in which we now have it.

It is in the *Muratorian Fragment* (175—200 A.D.) that we first meet with distinct references to S. Luke, as the author of the third Gospel, *by name*. It emphatically states the fact.

Before 140 A.D., it is impossible to say with certainty whether gospel-quotations in ecclesiastical writers are drawn from *our* gospels, for reasons already stated. Our Gospels were not yet recognized as canonical; other written gospels were in common use locally; oral tradition had not yet

been superseded; the quotations are anonymous (i.e. no Evangelist's name is mentioned, for the four gospels are still spoken of as "the gospel"), and in most cases these quotations amount to little more than parallelisms.

Justin Martyr (140 A.D.) was evidently familiar with S. Luke, for his works contain several obvious references to it^d.

Irenæus (180 A.D.) tells us: "Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel which Paul used to preach."

Eusebius informs us some were of opinion (*φασί*) that S. Paul referred to S. Luke's Gospel in the allusions he makes to "my Gospel" ("according to my Gospel"), e.g. Rom. ii. 16; xvi. 25; cf. 2 Tim. ii. 8). Origen alludes to S. Luke's Gospel as that praised by S. Paul.

(2) *Biography of S. Luke.* S. Luke is mentioned in Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11, and Philem. 24 as S. Paul's "beloved physician"; companion and fellow-worker. We must, of course, not confound "Lucas" of Col. iv. 14 with "Lucius, my kinsman" of Rom. xvi. 21.

From Col. iv. 10—12 it may be inferred that S. Luke was not "of the circumcision," that is to

^d Harnack adds, "Indeed a further step backward is permissible: for those who first formed a collection of the four Gospels, before the middle of the second century, gave this Gospel the inscription 'According to S. Luke.'"

say he was a Gentile, and presumably a Greek. From Acts xvi. we learn that he joined S. Paul at Troas (about 50 A.D.) ("and after he had seen the vision, immediately *we* endeavoured to go into Macedonia"^e) on S. Paul's second missionary journey, and accompanied him as far as Philippi. There he seems to have helped S. Paul in preaching the Gospel (xvi. 13). On this occasion, S. Luke apparently stayed at Philippi, not accompanying S. Paul on the rest of his journey. Some years later (about 57 A.D.) he rejoined the Apostle either at Philippi or Troas (xx. 5), and went in his company by way of Miletus and Cæsarea to Jerusalem. There they saw "James and all the Elders" (xxi. 18). S. Luke accompanied S. Paul on his voyage to Rome. At "Melita," S. Luke the physician seems to have helped S. Paul in healing the many "which had diseases," for the words: "others also, which had diseases, came and were healed, who also honoured *us* with many honours," can bear no other interpretation. S. Luke stayed with S. Paul in Rome during his imprisonment, and Philemon 24 speaks of him as S. Paul's "fellow-labourer." The last we hear of him is in 2 Tim. iv. 11, "Only Luke is with me."

From Acts xx. 4, 5 we know that S. Luke had as Pauline fellow-companions on the journey to Jerusalem (besides Silas), Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus.

^e Ramsay thinks Luke himself to have been the Macedonian man of Acts xvi. 9 ("*S. Paul the Trav.*" ix. 3).

At Rome, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Demas, Jesus surnamed Justus, Epaphras and others were also in S. Paul's company, besides Luke (Col. iv. 10 sqq.). At Cæsarea S. Luke became acquainted with "Philip the Evangelist, one of the seven, into whose house we entered, and abode with him^f." (Acts xxi. 8.)

Tradition says that S. Luke's birthplace was Antioch, and Harnack adduces strong reasons in support of this tradition.

S. Luke was not an "eye-witness of the Ministry," but, like S. Mark and S. Paul himself, obtained his information from others. He is the only non-Jewish writer in the New Testament, so far as we can judge.

S. Luke's Preface (i. 2) clearly proves that S. Luke was not "an eye-witness from the beginning." His dedication shows a desire to impress Theophilus with the conviction that his information is in every way trustworthy. Now, had he himself been an "eye-witness," he would certainly have laid stress on the fact. When S. Luke was converted we do not know. As a physician, he must have been a man of considerable culture. This is borne out by the exceedingly high literary standard of his Gospel and the comparative excellence of his Greek,

^f Harnack seems convinced that S. Luke obtained a considerable portion of his information from S. Philip and his "four daughters, virgins which did prophesy," and he thus accounts for the large feminine element in his Gospel.

especially in the Preface. The dedication of this historical work to the "most excellent Theophilus" seems to imply that the two treatises were in the first instance intended for the instruction and confirmation in the Faith of cultured men of high rank. Origen and others, however, see in "Theophilus" ("beloved of God"), merely a symbolic title of the true "godly" disciple. One thing is certain: S. Luke, as his writings show, was a born philanthropist, very tender-hearted to the weak and poor, and a man of consummate literary taste and skill.

His visit to Jerusalem was in all probability the first occasion on which he entered that city or Palestine itself. In Jerusalem, they met S. James, but apparently none of the other Apostles.

S. Luke was intimately acquainted, not only with S. Mark's Gospel, but with S. Mark himself. They were constantly together as companions of S. Paul, especially during the Roman imprisonment (Col. iv. 10 and 14; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11). S. Luke knows all about Mark's home, even to the name of Rhoda the servant, and he describes the house and its outer porch.

For some inexplicable reason, S. Luke seems not to have been prepossessed with S. Mark. As Harnack points out, not only does Luke in his Preface unfavourably criticize his predecessors' attempts at gospel-writing, including S. Mark's, but "the only Apostolic man about whom something unpleasant is recorded in the Acts is Mark, whom he accuses

of breach of faith (xiii. 13, cf. xv. 37 sqq.) and makes him answerable for the separation of Paul and Barnabas, a bitter reproach which Luke has not shrunk from perpetuating." Even Irenæus detected this, and thought it strange.

The vivid and detailed picture in the prophecy of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem (S. Luke xix. 43, 44; xxi. 20, 24) implies that Jerusalem had been reduced to a heap of ruins before these passages were written^f. S. Luke therefore survived the Fall of Jerusalem.

Late tradition adds the doubtful details that S. Luke was a skilled painter, one of the Seventy, and the unnamed companion of Cleopas on the way to Emmaus (S. Luke xxiv.). The two last-named facts would make S. Luke an "eye-witness" and are inconsistent with the wording of the Preface. The painter-tradition is of exceedingly late date. On the other hand, the tradition that S. Luke ended his days in Achaia seems trustworthy, though Harnack is disposed to favour the other view which makes him take up his permanent abode in Asia, near Ephesus, after leaving Rome. S. Luke certainly displays an exceptional interest in connection with Ephesus and its Church. From Asia or Achaia, S. Luke seems to have written his Gospel between 75—80 A.D.^f

^f Blass, however, thinks there is little in Luke xxi. 20 not already contained in Dan. ix. 26. Schmiedel and Burkitt detect loans from Josephus in S. Luke. If so, this necessitates a late date, but see Headlam, Hastings' D.B. 1—30.

(3) *Leading ideas of S. Luke's Gospel.*

Before we proceed to an examination of the sources of the third Gospel, and its historical or doctrinal value, it may be advisable to make a brief survey of its chief traits.

(a) *Universality of S. Luke's Gospel.* Both in the Acts and the Gospel S. Luke's evident design is to set forth the universality of the Gospel of Christ. In his Gospel-story, Luke presents our Lord as the universal Saviour of the world, and dwells on Christ's glad tidings of mercy, hope and love as addressed to all nations. In the Acts we see Christianity fulfilling its Founder's original design in a remarkable way. There we have the picture of the gradual development of the Church "from Jerusalem to Rome," as well as the universal proclamation and equally universal acceptance of the Gospel all over the civilized world, in the face of much opposition and innumerable dangers and obstacles.

S. Luke's Gospel has been well described as the Gospel of Humanity. He is more of a universalist even than S. Paul. Not only is the third Gospel dedicated to a Gentile, but, throughout S. Luke's narrative, the barrier between Jew and Gentile is broken down. If anything, there is a preference of Gentiles to Jews. S. Luke's object is apparent from the outset. It is to preach "the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us. *To give light to them*

that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (i. 77—79) ; to proclaim the "salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of *all people* ; *a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Thy people Israel*" (ii. 30—32) §.

By reason of the universality of his Gospel, S. Luke traces back our Lord's genealogy, not to Abraham the father of Israel, but to Adam the father of all men. We see this principle consistently followed throughout the whole Gospel, as a few illustrations will show. S. Matthew lays emphasis on the mission of the Twelve, the representatives of the twelve tribes ; S. Luke lays the stress on the mission of the Seventy, emblematic of the 70 (or 72) nations of the earth (Westcott). In the sermon at Nazareth (at the outset of our Lord's public Life, according to S. Luke), our Lord emphatically exalts Gentiles over Jews. "I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias . . . but unto none of them was Elias sent, but unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. Many lepers were in Israel in the days of Eliseus the prophet, and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian" (iv. 25—28). Several passages in S. Luke are concerned with the despised Samaritans (ix. 51—56 ; x. 25—37 ;

§ In the two first chapters only is stress laid on the fulfilment of the Law ; there Luke traces the exact fulfilment of the Law e.g. ii. 22, 23, 24, 27, 39), not only by the parents of Jesus, but also by the parents of His messenger. The word "Law" only occurs in four other places in S. Luke (x. 26 ; xvi. 16, 17 ; xxiv. 44).

xvii. 11—19), and he invariably speaks of them most favourably and tenderly. The sons of Zebedee are sternly rebuked for wishing to bring down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans. It is a Samaritan who is chosen as the embodiment of charity and puts the heartless Jewish priest and Levite to shame; just as the heartfelt gratitude of the one Samaritan leper is made to stand in strong contrast to the meanness of the eight lepers who are Jews. On the journeys of our Lord from Galilee to Jerusalem, S. Luke represents Christ as invariably going through Samaria, contrary to Jewish custom, while S. Mark makes our Lord adopt the usual Jewish practice of going round through *Peræa* to avoid Samaria.

Similarly in x. 13, 14 Tyre and Sidon are favourably contrasted with Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. The parables of the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son can also, without any stretch of the imagination, be seen to refer to the tender love of God towards the Gentiles who had gone away from a Father yearning for their return. Almost the last words of the third Gospel re-echo its earliest proclamation, for in Luke xxiv. 47 we have Christ's own charge that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (cf. ii. 30, 32). These words also form the connecting link between the Gospel and the Acts, for the latter is but an expansion of this theme. (Acts i. 8.)

On the other hand, care should be taken not to

read anti-Jewish teaching into the third Gospel. Luke's Gospel is, not a party document or an apologetical treatise, but a history. He is writing mainly for Gentile readers, as the dedication indicates, and naturally omits much about Jews which would not be of interest to Gentiles. Appeals to the Old Testament, especially to prophecy, and references to the Jewish Law are therefore few. As it is, S. Luke shows great reverence for the Law, e.g. "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the Law to fail" (xvi. 17): "they have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them" (xvi. 29 ; cf. xviii. 20 sqq., v. 14 ; x. 26 ; xvii. 14).

To say that there are no anti-Jewish sentiments in S. Luke would not be true. They abound in S. Matthew and S. Mark, while Christ evidently denounced the Jews in no measured terms on more than one occasion, therefore S. Luke, if he is a faithful historian, is bound to place them on record. But there is no need to ferret out beneath his plain words a hidden meaning and a Jewish antipathy which are not there. It would be a libel on the tolerant universalist Luke, who preaches the glorious tidings of forgiveness to all without distinction, to say that he excludes the Jews from this universal pardon.

(b) *S. Luke's is the gospel of forgiveness.* This naturally follows as a corollary from the universality of his Gospel of glad tidings. Forgiveness is the key-note of his Gospel, and specially is this

the case in the passages which are peculiar to Luke himself. We see this trait in the story of the woman, a sinner, who washed and anointed our Lord's feet (vii. 36—50), and it is immediately followed by a parable to the same effect, the story of the two debtors. In S. Luke xv. 1—32 we have a series of parables illustrating the love and forgiveness of God in seeking that which was lost, culminating in that "pearl of parables," the Prodigal Son. The same fundamental idea is patent in the story of the Publican, in the prayer on the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and in the pardon of the penitent thief.

(c) *Prominence given to women in S. Luke.* In our Lord's day, women were very inadequately appreciated. Woman, among the Jews, did not hold a high place, and in Greece it was the same. In Rome, there were signs of better things, and Lightfoot says that in Macedonia women stood far higher in the social scale than elsewhere. Hence it is, perhaps, not surprising to see ladies of birth and rank (e.g. Lydia) at Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea taking an active part with S. Paul in his evangelical work. Possibly this experience may have influenced S. Luke in his estimate of women; more probably his respect for the sex is due to his own gentle loving nature.

Be this as it may, S. Luke herein follows in our Lord's footsteps. It was our Lord Who, both by His teaching and example, for the first time

raised woman to the position and dignity which is hers by right. Similarly, Luke is the first Evangelist to assign her the prominent place she occupies in the Gospel-story, both as ministering to our Lord and in other respects.

It is S. Luke alone who mentions:—

(a) The songs of Mary and Elizabeth, and the words of Anna, the prophetess (i.—ii.).

(b) The widow of Nain (vii.).

(c) The sinful woman who loved much (vii.).

(d) The names of the band of noble women, Mary called Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza, Susanna and many others, who ministered unto Him of their substance (viii., but cf. S. Matth. xxvii. 55^h).

(e) The devoted service of Mary and Martha (x. 38—42).

(f) The woman who exclaimed “Blessed is the womb that bare Thee” (xi. 27).

(g) The afflicted daughter of Abraham, who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years (xiii. 11).

(h) The parable of the “Widow and the unjust judge” and of “the woman and the lost pieces of silver” (xv. and xviii.).

The following are also to be found in other Gospels:

(i) The widow’s mite (cf. S. Mark xii.).

(j) The daughters of Jerusalem weeping over our

^h S. Mark partly refers to this ministration in Mark xv. 40.

Lord's sufferings — but the words "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me." &c., are Luke's alone.

(*k*) The women who followed Jesus from Galilee, and stand afar off beholding the Cross, and go to the sepulchre to see how His Body is laid.

(*l*) According to S. Luke alone, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women are the first to tell the Apostles of the Resurrection. On the other hand, unlike the other Evangelists, S. Luke records no appearance of our Lord to any womanⁱ.

(*d*) *S. Luke's leanings towards the poor.* "It is noticeable how much of the teaching preserved for us *only* by S. Luke deals with the use of riches" (Bebb). S. Luke's warm heart is full of a great sympathy with the suffering poor, and a great horror of the temptation to selfishness which besets the rich. He is sad at heart, like the Christ, at the sight of so much luxury and display side by side with abject poverty and want. Therefore his large-heartedness has unconsciously given a slight bias and colouring to his version of the many warnings of our Lord against the "deceitfulness of riches^k." Similarly it has prompted him to lay great stress on our Lord's

ⁱ It has been noted by Von Soden that in the additions peculiar to S. Luke we find three passages concerned with Samaritans (ix. 51—56; x. 25—37; xvii. 11—19); three with sinners (vii. 36—50; xviii. 9—14; xix. 1—10), and three with women (vii. 36—50; viii. 1—3; x. 38—42).

^k See Burkitt, "Transmission of Gospel," p. 210 sqq.

text in His Nazareth Sermon: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor: He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (S. Luke iv. 18).

Thus it is that S. Luke's Gospel is full of words of comfort for the poor, of warning to the rich. The key-note is already struck in the *Magnificat*. Mary's psalm, modelled largely on Hannah's, is a hymn of praise in exaltation of the lowly, and this note pervades the Gospel. It is S. Luke alone who has preserved for us the parables of Dives and Lazarus, the Rich Fool, and the Unjust Steward. He alone records the following sayings of our Lord: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting," &c. (xxi. 34); "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room," &c. (xiv. 8); "When thou makest a feast call not thy friends, nor thy rich neighbours—but the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind" (xiv. 12, 13). It is Luke again who gives a *material* sense to our Lord's spiritual words: "Blessed be ye poor; blessed are ye that hunger now; woe unto you that are rich: woe unto you that are full" (vi. 20—26)¹.

¹ Yet he exactly reports Christ. In our Lord's day, the phrases "the poor," "the humble," "the meek," "the hungry," mean the "poor in spirit," &c. They are O.T. phrases used, as in the Psalms, in a *religious* sense, and so are their opposites: "the rich," "the proud," "the full," "the wicked," "the scornful," &c.

(e) *S. Luke is the Gospel of rejoicing and triumph.* "What a trumpet-note of joy, courage, and triumph sounds through the whole Lukan history from the first to the last pages! *Vexilla regis prodeunt.* We listen in vain for this note in the other Evangelists" (Harnack).

Thankful hearts, in Luke's pages, are constantly finding vent in songs of praise, e.g. the Angels' Song, *Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, *Nunc Dimittis*; "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost," &c. (xv. 4—11); "Let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again," &c. (xv. 23 sqq.); "And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, praising and blessing God" (xxiv. 52, 53).

(f) *S. Luke is the Gospel of a poet and painter.* A late tradition speaks of S. Luke as a skilled painter. This is probably only a legend, but it is true in idea, if not true to fact. There is a literary finish and wealth of colouring, a rhythm and symmetry in the third Gospel which make it the most perfect in form of them all, a Gospel of poetry and beauty, full of a soft atmosphere of love, compassion, and joy. It is only the lucidity and simplicity of the artist's style that mask the consummate art of his finished composition.

To S. Luke we owe the exquisite picture of the large-hearted Christ moved with infinite compassion for a fallen race, leaving the ninety and nine to go and seek the one lost sheep, "*and when He hath found it, He layeth it on His shoulders, rejoicing.*"

S. Luke, throughout his Gospel, portrays the Son of Man with a form and comeliness fairer than the children of men.

The whole of the third Gospel is a gallery of pictures brilliant in colouring and finish, e.g. the Mother and Child ; Mary and Martha ; the sinful woman with the long flowing hair ; the Prodigal Son ; the daughters of Jerusalem weeping over the suffering Christ on His way to the Cross ; the two disciples going to Emmaus ; the Lord ascending with hands uplifted to bless.

"S. Luke," says Harnack, "was a Greek, and he possesses the mind and sense of form of a Greek." His artistic soul rejoices in the word-picture parables of our Lord. He alone of the Evangelists could appreciate the perfect literary form in which Christ instinctively clothed these parables, and he alone reproduces it faithfully. Hence he has sometimes been accused of consciously embellishing our Lord's parables.

Naturally, to a man of Luke's refined taste, with a real feeling for what is true, beautiful, and correct in style and form, the composition of S. Mark must have seemed rude, uncouth, fragmentary yet diffuse, the work of an illiterate, and altogether distasteful. If we may venture on Arnold's phrase in this connection, S. Luke was a "child of light," and S. Mark, in his eyes, a "Philistine."

Perfectly acquainted as was S. Luke with the canons of literary composition ; a "poet-painter" ;

writing, moreover, for educated readers ("most excellent Theophilus") of high position; sensitive of the effect which correct form must produce on such minds, he feels it to be his first duty severely to edit S. Mark, meanwhile adhering as closely as he can to the original document before him. Thus he constantly finds himself compelled to substitute classical words for Mark's vulgar Greek, to revise the style generally, to suppress passages which seem superfluous, lacking in interest to his readers, offensive, or better recorded in his other sources of information.

Above all, S. Luke is anxious to present a narrative not only perfect in form, but connected and complete in itself, and with its historical facts set forth in their proper chronological order.

The literary skill and tact with which S. Luke approaches this delicate and difficult task is beyond all praise, but, as we shall see, it is more than questionable whether he does not at times sacrifice historicity to form.

CHAPTER XVII.

S. LUKE'S SOURCES—MATTHÆAN *LOGIA*.

Argument.

ANALYSIS of S. Luke's Preface. His reasons for claiming exceptional completeness and accuracy for his Gospel. S. Mark forms the backbone of S. Luke's narrative, but the third Evangelist also makes free use of S. Matthew's *Logia*, and has private sources of information for a large number of passages peculiar to this Gospel. Tentative reconstruction of the Matthaean *Logia*. Difficulty of the task. Conclusions to be drawn from a comparison of the *Logia* common to S. Matthew and S. Luke: (1) Q is almost entirely discourse-material; (2) ethical, but free from dogmatic theology; (3) full of Messianic colouring; (4) contains few miracles; (5) consists of mosaics of independent sayings; (6) belongs to the first cycle of tradition. Reasons for believing that our S. Matthew adheres more closely than S. Luke to the original.

S. Luke's private sources of information. Examination of the sections in the third Gospel peculiar to S. Luke. S. Luke's historicity. Note on S. Mark's possible use of the *Logia*.

CHAPTER XVII.

S. LUKE'S SOURCES—MATTHÆAN *LOGIA*.

IF we turn to S. Luke's Preface, it clearly brings out the following points directly bearing on the sources of his information in the composition of his Gospel.

(a) S. Luke was not an "eye-witness" of our Lord's Ministry. He has to depend on the evidence of others and on his own careful research for his facts.

(b) He writes his Gospel because he considers his information to be far more reliable and complete than that of any of the gospel-writers before him, whom he proposes to supersede.

(c) He claims this superior knowledge for himself on the plea that "he has traced the course of all things accurately from the first" (i. 3 R.V.). As Westcott points out, each word in this sentence tells its tale. S. Luke implies that he has watched, step by step, the gradual unfolding of Christianity and its teaching, and that he has a knowledge of the whole cycle of "tradition" from first to last, without a break. He also lays stress on the special care (*ἀκριβῶς*) he has taken to be accurate, and on the orderly arrangement (*καθεξῆς*) of his material.

His treatise is continuous from start to finish, complete, exact and orderly.

(d) In the clause "even as they *delivered*," the tense of the verb "delivered" (*παρέδοσαν*) suggests that the eye-witnesses who originally handed down the history are no longer present. Be this as it may, the internal evidence proves that S. Luke wrote after S. Mark, for he embodies his Gospel. It is also clear that at the time of S. Luke's composition, Jerusalem was in ruins (i.e. after 70 A.D.).

Thus S. Luke was writing his Gospel at least forty years after the events it records. He was not an eye-witness, yet he claims for his Gospel an exceptional completeness and accuracy on the plea that he has been in a position to obtain complete knowledge from the very first, and that he has carefully consulted all available authorities.

What, then, were these eminently trustworthy sources of information on which S. Luke so implicitly relies?

S. Mark One of these sources is absolutely certain. The contents of S. Luke clearly prove that he (like S. Matthew) pays Mark the well-deserved compliment of regarding the second Gospel as quite satisfying his critical ideas of authentic tradition at first hand, so far as the material is concerned. S. Mark is the backbone of both the first and third Gospels, though there are omissions and interpolations both in Luke's and Matthew's versions of Mark's Petrine Memoirs.

Logia. Now, if we subtract S. Mark from S. Matthew, we obtain a remainder consisting of a large amount of *discourse-material* and a very small and insignificant portion of *narrative-material*.

Apply the same process to S. Luke and a totally different result ensues. S. Luke *minus* S. Mark yields, not only a vast amount of *discourse-material* bearing the closest possible family likeness to that in S. Matthew, but an almost equally large proportion of *narrative-material* entirely new and peculiar to S. Luke. This new material S. Luke evidently obtained by his own research from private sources not available to the other two Evangelists.

In the new discourse-material in S. Matthew and S. Luke, the parallelisms are so obvious, the matter and even the wording are often so identical, that there is but one conclusion to be drawn. This discourse-material is directly or indirectly derived from one common original source, and the close verbal agreement further suggests a common *written* source.

This common original document is now generally believed by scholars to be the famous "*Logia*," "oracles," or "sayings of Jesus," collected by the Apostle S. Matthew, about 50 A.D.

So far, our analysis of the first and third Gospels has produced the following results :—

S. Matthew = S. Mark + *Logia* + a small remainder.

S. Luke = S. Mark + *Logia* + a very large remainder.

At first sight, it would seem to be the easiest thing in the world to reconstruct the original "*Logia*" document by means of what is known in Logic as the "Method of Agreement and Difference." The problem seems to invite a very simple solution. Place the *Logia* sections of S. Matthew and S. Luke respectively side by side, collate all that the two Evangelists have in common in these sections, and there you have the original Matthæan *Logia*.

Simple and plausible as this method may sound in theory, it entirely breaks down in practice. It is a valuable clue, but its thread is incomplete and only acts as our guide half-way through the maze, and then fails us.

These common *Logia* sections are often tantalizingly alike in the two Evangelists, yet seldom tally. In S. Matthew the "sayings" are temptingly collected into five large cognate groups, each comprising one, two or even three chapters, while in S. Luke they are scattered all over the gospel in twenty or more places and, moreover, in short passages, never filling one chapter. Even when we have carefully collated the parallel sections and placed them side by side, another difficulty arises. They do not coincide. One Evangelist may have ten verses where the other has six: worse still, each Evangelist has clearly treated the original material

with considerable freedom. He has impressed upon the matter and wording his own stamp, recasting many of the phrases and approaching the material from his own point of view.

Any serious attempt at a complete reconstruction of the original *Logia* is therefore purely conjectural and doomed to failure. For example, one school of critics is positive that our S. Matthew's five large groupings of the "Sayings" are artificial confluations of his own, while S. Luke's numerous and more compact discourse-passages preserve the original order and true historical setting of our Lord's "sayings." On the other hand, other critics, equally eminent, insist that our Matthew's groupings already existed in the original Matthæan *Logia*, and that it is precisely his fidelity to this document, in the matter of grouping and otherwise, that gives the work of our first Evangelist the right to be called the Gospel *according to S. Matthew*.

Again, when one Evangelist devotes twenty lines to a passage from the *Logia* and the other only ten or twelve, how are we to decide which of the two omits, which interpolates?

Scholars have brought an immense amount of patience and learning to bear upon the task of the reconstruction of the original *Logia*. The most elaborate and minute analysis has been made of the extant *Logia* passages in our Matthew and Luke. More than this, in the desire to restore the original still more thoroughly, the Greek form of words has

been retranslated into Aramaic ; yet without success. The problem is too complicated to be solved. In subject-matter, the substance of the original *Logia* has been restored, but in other respects we know no more than we did at the start. Q^a probably contained some narrative-material (e.g. the healing of the Centurion's servant), but nine-tenths of the original document apparently consisted entirely of "sayings" or discourses. Elsewhere, we are in a fog. Where our S. Matthew and S. Luke differ, no one can tell us whether one interpolates or the other omits. We do not know which is the nearer in wording or material to the original, or whether S. Luke's order and historical setting is more true to the Matthæan *Logia* than S. Matthew's groups.

We can no more reconstruct the lost Gospel of S. Matthew the Apostle than we could restore a lost S. Mark from S. Matthew and S. Luke. With S. Mark actually before us, we can clearly see with what freedom the other two Evangelists treated the second Gospel in incorporating it. We can also see how impossible it would be to reconstruct it from their narratives alone with anything approaching to completeness. Here we are in a far worse plight, for the original *Logia* is no longer extant. Fascinating as these schemes of reconstruction undoubtedly are, they are too precarious and conjectural to be of any real use. The only course open to us is to

^a The lost document used by Matthew and Luke is commonly known among scholars as Q.

collate as complete a list as possible of the *Logia* passages in Matthew and Luke, draw the conclusions which the evidence of these passages seems to justify, and leave it to the reader to accept or reject these inferences with all the facts before him as his guide. The honest critic is bound to interpret the evidence to the best of his ability, but, if he is wise, he will be careful to return an open verdict.

Omitting many single-verse parallels, the following passages fairly represent the common material in S. Matthew and S. Luke, after we have deducted the S. Mark source :—

Matth. iii. 7—12 ; Luke iii. 7—9, 16, 17 ; (John the Baptist's preaching).

Matth. iv. 1—11 ; Luke iv. 1—13 (Temptation).

Matth. v., vi., vii. = Luke vi. 20 sqq. (Sermon on the Mount.)

[*Add in S. Luke :—*

Law eternal Luke xvi. 17 = Matth. v. 18.

Agree with

adversary Luke xii. 58, 59 = Matth. v. 25, 26.

Divorce Luke xvi. 18 = Matth. v. 32.

Prayer Luke xi. 2—4 = Matth. vi. 9—13.

Luke xi. 9—13 = Matth. vii. 7—11.

Heavenly

treasure Luke xii. 33, 34 = Matth. vi. 19—21.

Light of body Luke xi. 34—36 = Matth. vi. 22, 23.

Two Masters Luke xvi. 13 = Matth. vi. 24.

Take no

thought Luke xii. 22—32 = Matth. vi. 25—34.]

Matth. viii. 5—13; Luke vii. 1—10 (Healing of centurion's servant).

Matth. viii. 11, 12 = Luke xiii. 28, 29 (Inclusion of Gentiles in kingdom).

Matth. viii. 19—22; Luke ix. 57—62 (Christ's answer to two men who offer to follow Him).

Matth. ix. 37, 38, x. 1—15; Luke x. 1—12 (Mission of the ^{Twelve}_{Seventy}).

Matth. x. 19, 20 = Luke xii. 11, 12 (Premeditate not).

Matth. x. 26—31; Luke xii. 2—7 (Fear not them that kill the body).

Matth. x. 32; Luke xii. 8, 9 (Confessing Christ before men); Matth. x. 34—36; Luke xii. 51—53 (Christ not come to send peace, but a sword); Matth. x. 37—39; Luke xiv. 26, 27 (Loving Christ more than parents).

Matth. xi. 2—14, 16—19; Luke vii. 19—28, 31—35 (John the Baptist's message, Christ's words about him).

Matth. xi. 12, 13 = Luke xvi. 16 (The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence).

Matth. xi. 21—25; Luke x. 12—15 (Woe unto thee, Chorazin, &c.).

Matth. xi. 25—27; Luke x. 21, 22 ("I thank Thee, Father, that Thou hast hid," &c.).

Matth. xii. 22—30; Luke xi. 14—23 (Christ accused of casting out devils through Beelzebub).

Matth. xii. 35 = Luke vi. 45 (Heart-treasure).

Matth. xii. 43—45; Luke xi. 24—26 (The unclean spirit returns to its home).

Matth. xii. 38—42 ; Luke xi. 29—32 (The signs of Jonah, queen of Sheba, Nineveh).

Matth. xiii. 16, 17 = Luke x. 23, 24 (Ye are blessed above prophets and kings).

Matth. xiii. 31—33 = Luke xiii. 19—21 (Mustard seed).

Matth. xvi. 2—4 = Luke xii. 54—57 (Asking for a sign).

Matth. xviii. 12—14 ; Luke xv. 4 sqq. (The one lost sheep).

Matth. xxii. 1—14 ; Luke xiv. 16—24 (Wedding Feast).

Matth. xxiii. 12 = Luke xviii. 14 and xiv. 11.

Matth. xxiii. 23—39 ; Luke xi. 37—52 ; xiii. 34, 35 (Woes on the Pharisees). (cf. Luke xiii. 22—35, which seems to be made up of separate sayings found in Matth. vii. 13 sq., xxv. 11, 12, vii. 23, viii. 11, 12, xiii. 42, xix. 30, xxiii. 37—39.)

Matth. xxiv. 26—28.	} 37—41. }	42—51. }
Luke xvii. 23—25.		
	} 26—29. }	xii.—39—46. }

(Sudden Coming of the Son of Man.)

Matth. xxv. 14—30 ; Luke xix. 12—27 (Parable of ^{talents}_{pounds}).

Matth. xxv. 1—13, cf. Luke xii. 35 sqq. (Waiting for the bridegroom).

An analysis of Q (Logia) yields the following main results :—

A. Historical :—

(a) The Temptation.

(b) Allusion to the imprisonment of John, and his sending two messengers to Jesus.

- (c) Healing of the centurion's servant.
- (d) Mission of the Twelve (Matth.), Seventy (Luke).
- (e) Allusions to two (Matth.), three (Luke) men who offer to follow Christ without having counted the cost.

B. Discourses :—

(a) *S. John the Baptist.* The Baptist proclaims the speedy coming of the Messianic Kingdom, and sternly summons all classes to repent and prepare for it.

The Baptist's message to Christ. Christ's reply ; also Christ's estimate of the Baptist's mission and person.

(b) *Christ's teaching on character and conduct.* Our Lord's analysis of the character of the true citizen of the Kingdom of God (Beatitudes). Rules of conduct. Christ makes all true character and conduct flow from sincere unselfish love of heart, a love revealing itself outwardly in active kindness, self-denial, and the service of our fellow-men. Christ teaches that implicit trust in God is a note of the child of God ; also that all prayer has three elements : viz. (1) The advancement of God's Kingdom ; (2) personal petitions ; (3) kindly thought for our fellow-men's welfare. Christ condemns those who are hearers only of His words and not doers. Our Lord defines our proper attitude towards enemies and worldly goods.

(c) *Christ's teaching on discipleship.* The Messianic Kingdom must be preached ("The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few"). For this great work Messiah's disciples must be prepared to give up everything the world values, go to their work absolutely unhampered, spend themselves in Messiah's service, and expect no thanks but only persecution.

(d) *Predictions of the Coming of the Messiah in judgment.* The "Son of Man" will come suddenly like lightning, when men least expect Him, therefore "watch and be ready." Signs of the coming storm. The terrors of the judgment in store for the unwatchful and unready.

(e) *Pharisees.* Christ's repudiation of the calumnious charge which the Pharisees bring against Him: "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the prince of devils." Our Lord's woes pronounced against the Pharisees. He cautions His disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees. The Pharisees ask Christ for a sign; His reply.

(f) *Jews and Gentiles.* The Gentile Centurion puts Israel to shame. Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom favourably contrasted with Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. The Queen of Sheba and Nineveh more praiseworthy in Christ's eyes than the Jews of His day. Our Lord's tears over Jerusalem. The inheritance of the Kingdom is taken away from Israel. Many shall enter the Kingdom of God from East, West, North, and South, while the children of Abraham shall be thrust out of it.

(g) *Parables.* The mote and beam (Matth. vii. 3—5; Luke vi. 41, 42). The good tree (Matth. vii. 17—20; Luke vi. 43, 44). The two builders (Matth. vii. 24—29; Luke vi. 47—49). Children playing in the market-place (Matth. xi. 16 sqq.; Luke vii. 31 sqq.). The Leaven (Matth. xiii. 33; Luke xiii. 20, 21). The blind leading the blind (Matth. xv. 14; Luke vi. 39). The lost sheep (Matth. xviii. 12, 13; Luke xv. 4, 5). Parable of the great feast (Matth. xxii. 1—14; Luke xiv. 16—24). Parable of the ^{talents} _{pounds} (Matth. xxv. 14 sqq.; Luke xix. 12 sqq.). (cf. similes of the "unclean spirit"; "light of the body"; "treasure in heaven.")

Conclusions. With the exception of the Temptation (and Baptism?); the healing of the centurion's servant; the *allusion* to John the Baptist's imprisonment, preaching and mission of the two messengers to Christ; and the bare mention of two aspirants to discipleship;—there is literally nothing but discourse-material in Q. Even in these passages, the historical facts merely serve as the barest introduction to the conversations that follow. Only once does a saying require for its right understanding a fuller story, and this is briefly and simply told (S. Matth. viii. 5—13 = S. Luke vii. 2—10). This is invariably the case in Q. It is essentially a collection of "*Sayings of Jesus*," with here and there the slightest and most colourless narrative-setting. The compiler prefaces his "sayings" with the most meagre introduction, e.g. "Jesus said,"

"Another parable spake He unto them," "When the people were gathered together, He began to say," "He said to the people." We may, therefore, safely state that Q consisted of discourses with an infinitesimal fraction of historical fact. The parallel passages in S. Matthew and S. Luke suggest this and nothing more.

Q, like the Petrine Memoirs, and for a similar reason, takes little or no interest in dogmatic theology^b. All the emphasis is laid on the *moral* requirements of our Lord's teaching. As in S. James and the first cycle of Palestinian tradition, the teaching of the *Logia* is essentially ethical and practical. It inculcates a religion of action, a religion of character and conduct, a religion of men who are doers of the Word and not hearers only.

On the other hand, great stress is laid on the Coming of Messiah in Glory and judgment. We meet with the expressions "Son of Man," "Kingdom of God"^c at every turn. In Q, we are living in an

^b Matth. xxviii. 18, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth"; = Luke x. 22. "All things are delivered unto Me of my Father," seems to be the one exception. In the *Logia* there are no "It hath been said to them of old, but I say unto you" declarations, as in Matthew, prefacing Christ's utterances.

^c Except in S. Matth. xii. 28, S. Matthew invariably speaks of "the Kingdom of Heaven," S. Luke as constantly calls it "the Kingdom of God." The Jewish colouring of Matthew's phrase makes it more than probable that he retains the phraseology of Q; while the Gentile Evangelists substitute for it the formula more intelligible to Greeks.

atmosphere of Messianic expectations. Man's earthly life is viewed mainly as a preparation for this Coming in the immediate future. "The Kingdom of God is at hand" is the consideration that gives the present its vital importance, and the Christian watchword is, "Be ye ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

Miracles are conspicuous by their absence in Q, for obvious reasons. We have seen that the Petrine Memoirs abound in "mighty works" and have hardly any discourses because S. Mark sets before us a Christ in action, not a teaching Christ. On the same principle, Q is full of discourses, and contains but two miracles^d (centurion's servant and the dumb demoniac), Matth. ix. 32 sqq.; cf. xii. 22 sqq. = Luke xi. 14 sqq.), because it is mainly a collection of the "sayings" and not the "doings" of our Lord.

Once more, Q does not profess to arrange the discourses in their chronological order. In all probability the compiler of the collection, at the time of its composition, was not in a position to assign to each utterance its proper chronological place in our Lord's Ministry. Even if he could have given each "saying" its original historical setting, it is more than questionable whether he would have done so. He had nothing to do with history or chronology. This was not his aim at all.

Thus Q has all the characteristic notes of a very

^d That Jesus worked other miracles is clearly stated in the *Logia*, e.g. S. Matth. xi. 21 = S. Luke x. 13.

primitive Jewish-Christian compilation. It is steeped in the atmosphere of Palestine, strongly anti-Pharisaic, essentially Messianic and eschatological. Q still considers the Mosaic Law as binding (Matth. v. 18 = Luke xvi. 17). No reference is made to the Passion^e. In Q, Christ is not regarded as Redeemer, but as the Teacher and Prophet of the Kingdom^f. The Coming in Glory is daily expected. Everything is viewed from this eschatological standpoint.

The sayings in Q are so fresh, simple and original that they bear Christ's own stamp on the face of them. They are all Christ's own, and nothing is borrowed from the Old Testament. We find no parallel to them except in the Petrine Memoirs of S. Mark. Where Q and Mark agree in their wording of these sayings, we may feel certain that we are as near to the actual words of Christ as can be.

Q was in Aramaic. The Matthew-Luke *Logia* still retain the Aramaic tinge. Possibly the Palestinian author of our S. Matthew may have borrowed his *Logia* direct from Q, while S. Luke would naturally copy them from a translation; or they may have used different Greek translations of Q. Something of this nature is needed to account for the agreement and disagreement in the *Logia* versions of S. Matthew and S. Luke.

^e But see Burkitt, "Transmission of the Gospel-History," 133 sqq.

^f Hence Ramsay's assumption that Q could not have been written after Christ's death, but in our Lord's lifetime. Why so? Q represents Christ's sayings, and has nothing to do with history or theology.

S. Matthew's groupings of the *Logia* are often characterized by critics as arbitrary and artificial. Is this strictly true?

In dealing with S. Mark, we have tried to show that the earliest Gospel-literature crystallized oral tradition at a time (about 50 A.D.) when catechizing had already become very systematic. Converts wanted to know (1) what the Old Testament had to say concerning Christ; (2) what Christ Himself had said; (3) what He had done. As they gained in experience, catechists would naturally meet these three requirements. In this way, oral teaching, and the written documents which afterwards embodied it, took three forms: (1) collections of Old Testament prophecies, (2) collections of "sayings" of Jesus, (3) brief "Lives of Christ."

But, if the utterances of Jesus were to be of practical use in catechizing, it was not enough to collate our Lord's separate sayings. They must be grouped under appropriate headings so that converts might know what our Lord had taught on such subjects as Prayer, Christian character and conduct, the Second Coming, and so forth. Christ's scattered sayings would therefore, at a very early date, be "conflated," i.e. independent sayings of allied meaning would be massed into groups, scattered utterances would be pieced together so as to form more or less continuous discourses.

Now if we could recover Q, it is very probable that we should find our Lord's utterances collected

into a number of such groups. These groupings would probably be like those in our S. Matthew, except that the latter has carried this principle still further and massed several of the original groups into one. The first Evangelist has at the same time added new material of his own. He has also developed the original *Logia* to meet the theological and ecclesiastical needs of a much later day ; but he has left the "sayings" as he found them, without any historical setting.

On the other hand, S. Luke seems to have adopted the opposite course. He has split up the original Q groups, scattered their contents here and there all over his Gospel, and given them a historical and chronological setting by blending the "sayings" with his historical narrative.

In this way, S. Luke naturally conveys the impression that, true to his promise in the Preface, he is giving us the Life in its strict chronological order. His connected narrative gives an idea of completeness, and of a close adherence to the original, lacking in S. Matthew, who is sacrificing chronology and historical accuracy to his artificial massing of kindred material into groups.

If our contention is correct, and the earliest Gospel-literature reproduces the three forms of systematic oral teaching, S. Luke's superiority is a delusion^g.

^g It is easy to understand why scholars who support the view that S. Luke's version of the *Logia* is closer to the original than S. Matthew's also insist that the *Logia* contained many historical facts.

It is S. Matthew and not S. Luke who is the truer to the original Q arrangement of the sayings, while in S. Luke we have the literary artist's hand at work. The third Evangelist *may* have had good reasons for rearranging the *Logia*. His careful private research *may* have placed him in a position to restore the "sayings" to their original setting, but Harnack gives good reasons for thinking otherwise. "S. Luke is an author whose writings read smoothly, but one has only to look somewhat more closely to discover that there is scarcely another writer in the New Testament who is so careless an historian as he; . . . in chapter after chapter, where he is not an eye-witness, he affords gross instances of carelessness, and often of complete confusion in the narrative" ("Luke the Physician," 112 sqq.)^b.

If we compare the accounts of our Lord's last journey as given in S. Matthew, S. Mark and S. Luke, what do we find? In Mark it occupies 52 verses, 64 in Matthew, and 408 in Luke! (Luke ix. 51—xix. 28). Some explain this by saying that S. Luke gives us a Samaritan journey (ix. 51, 52) while Mark

S. Luke places the "sayings" in a historical setting, therefore, say they, narrative entered largely into the original *Logia*. But if S. Luke reproduces the *Logia* so faithfully, why then does tradition, from the earliest times, ascribe to our first Gospel the distinctive title: "*according to S. Matthew?*"

^b For a vindication of S. Luke's historicity see Ramsay's "*S. Paul the Traveller*"; "*Was Christ born in Bethlehem?*" and his recent criticism of Harnack's "*Luke the Physician.*" In support of Luke's historicity as proved by Archæological Evidences, see also Hastings' D.B., I. 32.

records a Peræan journey (x. 1). Prof. Burkitt gives excellent reasons for believing that it is the same journey in both Evangelists. He suggests that possibly one section of our Lord's followers went by way of Peræa, while our Lord and the remainder proceeded through Samaria, but he truly adds: "that Luke has inserted a quantity of extraneous matter into his story, which belongs to other times and places, cannot be doubted. This is certainly the case with the sayings about Beelzebub (Luke xi. 15 sqq.), and it is hardly likely that Jesus would be taking a meal with Pharisees (xi. 37; xiv. 1), and that myriads of the people would be gathered together (xii. 1) in the midst of the Samaritan country," which the Jews so loathed.

There is only one way of satisfactorily accounting for (1) the vast mass of the discourse-material in this last journey account of S. Luke (2) as well as the extraordinary discrepancies between Matthew and Luke in their respective versions of the Sermon on the Mount, and (3) the general disagreement of Matthew and Luke in the historical setting of these discourses, viz., *Q had no historical setting of any kind*.

This is precisely the impression left on our minds by Papias' statement. He tells us that Matthew the Apostle collected together a number of the *logia* of our Lord in the Hebrew language, and "*each (reader) interpreted them as he could*." What do the last words imply? Surely this, that the *Matthæan*

Logia did not form a connected Gospel-story at all, but consisted of mere "sayings" without any indication of the place or time of their original utterance.

In spite of his consummate literary skill, even S. Luke fails to remedy this defect. If we look at his narrative of the last journey we see that it is artificially arranged. We are supposed to have in it an account of our Lord's journey to Jerusalem, yet not a single town or village is named till we reach Jericho, and Luke only knows of Jericho from S. Mark. All the other localities on the way are left absolutely vague, e.g. "They went to another village" (ix. 56; "as He entered into a certain village" (x. 38, "as He was praying in a certain place" (xi. 1), "He went through the cities and villages teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem." It is just the same with the prefaces with which S. Luke introduces the *Logia* all through the last-journey narrative: "After these things" (x. 1), "And it came to pass as He was praying in a certain place" (xi. 1), "In the mean time" (xii. 1), "There were present at that season some that told Him" (xiii. 1), "He was teaching in a synagogue" (xiii. 10, cf. xiv. 1; xv. 1; xvi. 1; xvii. 1; xiii. 1).

S. Luke is perfectly justified in his attempt to give a narrative perfect in its literary form. The subject-matter demanded all the ability, skill and literary powers he possessed. He lovingly and unsparingly devoted himself to his task. The *Logia*, in all

probability, had no historical settingⁱ, and early Christians recognized the fact. S. Luke was at liberty to arrange them in one way, S. Matthew was equally justified in arranging them in another. Which of the two is the more artificial in his re-arrangement of Q we cannot tell, but we believe it is not Matthew^k.

Why then does S. Luke profess to give us his narrative "in order"? why does he expressly claim superiority over his predecessors on this score, if his chronological arrangement is no better, and probably at times worse, than that of those who have gone before him? Or are we wrong in our interpretation of his word *καθεξῆς*, "in order"? Does it mean (1) "in order of time" at all? May it not equally correctly be translated (2) "in *logical* order," or, as Blass maintains, (3) "in its completeness"? In either case, this would be much more in keeping with S. Luke's Gospel and cover all its actual facts. There is a distinct unity of purpose running through it all. It is also a more complete record than any of the others, for it does not omit any important fact which the other Synoptics contain, while S. Luke's new material is very considerable both in amount and value.

ⁱ A document recently discovered—the Oxyrrhynchus Fragment—gives us a very old collection of our Lord's sayings, all simply prefaced by "Jesus says," and this was probably the case with Q.

^k *A priori*, which is the more likely to depart from the original, the matter-of-fact ecclesiastical Jewish author of our S. Matthew, or the imaginative Greek poet-painter Luke?

S. Luke's private sources of information. Over and above the Mark *plus* Logia sources, S. Luke has a considerable collection of material peculiar to himself, which has reached him through other channels. From a historical point of view, this new element in S. Luke cannot be placed on the same level as the Petrine Memoirs or the Matthæan *Logia*, which represent the earliest cycle of oral tradition. At the same time, we must not forget that our Gospels only give us a very small selection out of the immense amount of material embodied in oral tradition. "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they were written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John xxi. 25) is an Eastern hyperbole, but it is true in idea. The new material in S. Luke, the result of patient original research, *may* therefore be perfectly true to fact and crystallize oral tradition equally as correctly as the Petrine and Matthæan documents. But in dealing with the new element in Luke we have always to take one fact into consideration. S. Luke was a Greek and a literary artist, and the indelible impression which his writings leave on the critic's mind is that he was somewhat careless about verbal precision and paid undue attention to attractive literary form.

The new sections in S. Luke consist of a whole series of incidents and parables, e.g. :—

(a) *Infancy stories, and Songs.* S. Luke i. 5—25,

An angel announces to Zacharias the coming birth of John the Baptist ; Luke i. 26—38, Gabriel sent from God to announce to Mary the birth of Christ ; Luke i. 39—56, Mary's visit to Elisabeth ; the *Magnificat* ; Luke i. 57—80, nativity and circumcision of John, the *Benedictus* ; Luke ii. 1—20, Nativity of Christ, and the episode of the angel appearing to the shepherds ; Luke ii. 21—40, Circumcision of Christ, purification of Mary, presentation of Christ in the Temple, Simeon's and Anna's addresses, *Nunc Dimittis* ; Luke ii. 41—52, Jesus accompanies His parents to Jerusalem at the age of 12, scene in the Temple ; Luke iii. 23—38, The genealogy.

(b) *Incidents*, e.g., The penitent thief, the penitent harlot, Zacchæus, the ministering women, the Samaritan leper, the crooked woman, the widow of Nain, the sons of Zebedee wish to call down fire from heaven, the Seventy appointed, Galileans slain by Pilate, walk to Emmaus.

(c) *Parables*, e.g., Prodigal Son, Good Samaritan, Dives and Lazarus, Pharisee and Publican, the two debtors, the rich fool, the importunate friend.

(d) *Short sayings*. Of these there are a very large number, e.g., "No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new ; for he saith, the old is better" (v. 39) ; "Woe unto you that are rich," &c. (vi. 24—26) ; "No man having put his hand to the plough," &c. (ix. 62) ; "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (x. 18) ; "When a strong man

armed," &c. (xi. 21, 22); "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee," &c. (xi. 27, 28); "Fear not, little flock," &c. (xii. 32, 33); "Let your loins be girded about," &c. (xii. 35—38); "Are there few that be saved," &c. (xiii. 23—27); "Go ye, and tell that fox," &c. (xiii. 32—34); "As it was in the days of Lot," &c. (xvii. 28—30); "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you," &c. (xxii. 31—34); "Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting," &c. (xxi. 34—38); "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss" (xxii. 48); "Daughters of Jerusalem," &c. (xxiii. 28), &c., &c.

The portion of this new material which has been most severely handled by modern scholars is (a) The infancy stories, and the Songs. The genealogy data have also been subjected to a fierce search-light, and, on the whole, both S. Matthew's and S. Luke's genealogies are regarded as extremely artificial. Prof. Ramsay has attempted to establish S. Luke's credibility in connection with the *Census of Quirinius*, with some success. In the matter of the "Songs" Harnack suggests that S. Luke composed them himself. The majority of English critics, however, are inclined to prefer Dr. Sanday's view: "S. Luke always impresses his own signature upon his documents, and no doubt he has done so in his first two chapters, but (1) there are here a number of minute allusions to Jewish Law and ceremonial

so unlike S. Luke's manner, and (2) these chapters so exactly hit the attitude of expectancy which existed before the public appearance of Christ, that I venture to maintain that these two chapters and their Songs are essentially the most archaic thing in the whole New Testament."

It is impossible for us to say whence S. Luke derived his new information. There is a strongly Pauline character stamped on much of it¹. This does not necessarily mean that S. Luke derived it directly from S. Paul. It rather suggests that some one in sympathy with Pauline teaching had formed a special collection, from oral tradition, of utterances of our Lord (e.g. the Prodigal Son, the Pharisee and Publican, the Good Samaritan), a collection of sayings which preached a Gospel of free grace and abounding pardon. On the face of them, these parables are genuine utterances of Him Who spake as never man spake.

Harnack, on the other hand, makes out a strong case for the hypothesis that a very considerable portion of the matter peculiar to S. Luke (especially

¹ Harnack has noted the close connection in thought and language between S. Luke and S. Paul. Even their vocabulary is extraordinarily alike. Mark and Paul have 20 words in common; Matthew and Paul 29; John and Paul 17; Luke and Paul, 84. More striking still, from a theological point of view, is the use made by Luke and Paul of the words "grace" (*χάρις*) and "faith" (*πίστις*). The former occurs 146 times in the N.T., and only 21 times outside these two; the latter 243 times, and only 50 times outside Luke and Paul.

the *feminine* and *Samaritan* elements in the Gospel) represents a body of tradition which rests upon the authority of S. Philip the Evangelist and his prophesying daughters. We know for a fact that S. Luke "abode with Philip at Cæsarea, and tarried there many days" (Acts xxi. 8 sqq.) [*—vide* "Luke the Physician," 155 sqq. and 39).

Dr. Sanday, again, believes that in the infancy chapters: "S. Luke's knowledge is ultimately traceable to the Virgin Mary herself, in all probability through the little circle of women who were for some time in her company."

But all this is more or less conjectural. There are really no solid grounds on which to base these theories. All we know is that S. Luke tells us he consulted every available authority. We also know he was in the closest possible touch with Apostles and other reliable eye-witnesses, preachers and catechists who would supply him with valuable information.

Be his sources what they may, S. Luke has made excellent use of his information and produced a Gospel of supreme importance. In many respects it is unique. At the same time, we cannot conceal from ourselves the plain fact that he deals with his material with considerable freedom and independence. There is one hand and only one running through S. Luke, and it is Luke's; or as Dr. Sanday puts it: "He always impresses his own signature upon his documents." Therefore, as may

be expected, his editorial contributions are many, and sometimes questionable.

As a literary composition, S. Luke is infinitely superior to S. Mark, but in spite of the loud profession of his Preface, S. Luke has not superseded S. Mark as a *historical* work. The Second Evangelist still remains, in Prof. Burkitt's words, "our main source for the Gospel History."

Note.

The question has often been asked: Did S. Mark use the *Logia*? Most scholars answer in the negative, alleging that he probably did not know of the existence of the Matthæan *Logia*. This may be so. At the same time, we have seen that there is every reason to believe that the earliest Gospel-literature (copying oral tradition) assumed the three-fold form of (1) Collections of prophecies; (2) "Sayings of Jesus"; (3) Short Lives of Christ. If this view is correct, and if S. Mark represents the transition stage between these earlier occasional writings and the later systematic Gospel-records in book form, he can hardly have been unaware of the existence of these earlier "aids to faith." Is it likely that "a native of Jerusalem, whose maternal home had formed the centre of the primitive Church, and who knew the whole community" (Harnack), can have been unacquainted with the *Logia* of S. Matthew the Apostle, composed as early as 50 A.D.? No doubt, for S. Mark's purpose, S. Peter's reminiscences supplied practically all his needs. Our analysis of S. Mark's Gospel tends to prove that his main aim is to show a Christ in action, not a teaching Christ. Therefore there is little room for *Logia* in his Gospel-story. But such passages as iii. 23—29; vi. 7—11; x. 20—31, 42—45, which bear the strongest possible family-likeness to the *Logia*, may well have been derived from this source. They may, of course, equally well come direct from the oral tradition which lies behind the Matthæan *Logia*. It is impossible to go beyond mere conjecture in this matter, but there is no apparent reason why S. Mark may not have known and used the *Logia*. He undoubtedly incorporates some written source in his Chap. xiii.



CHAPTER XVIII.

S. MATTHEW.

Argument.

REASONS why our S. Matthew is not the Apostle Matthew's work. Explanation of the title "according to S. Matthew."

Introductory. S. Matthew is (1) the Gospel of Prophecy : (2) it is addressed to Jewish readers. (1) Early Palestinian Christians, like all Jews, often interpreted the Old Testament in a strangely artificial manner. S. Matthew gives a Christological interpretation to everything in the "Law and the Prophets." (2) S. Matthew, writing as a Jew for Jews, shows great reverence for the Mosaic Law. (3) S. Matthew's discourses are "conflations," or artificial groupings.

CHAPTER XVIII.

S. MATTHEW.

IN dealing with S. Matthew, we cannot follow the course hitherto adopted in the case of the other Synoptists, and begin with a biography of our author, or a review of the external evidence. Details of neither are forthcoming. We do not know the name of the author of the first Gospel, and the external evidence material is of no value.

On the strength of Papias' oft-quoted statement: "the Apostle Matthew composed the *Logia* of Jesus in the Hebrew tongue," tradition, from the second century onward, has assigned our first Gospel to S. Matthew the Apostle.

In this one instance, all scholars are agreed that tradition is wrong, and for the following (among other) reasons: (1) The evidence is clear and unanimous that the Apostle Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Hebrew (Aramaic) tongue; and the evidence is equally clear that our first Gospel is not a translation from Aramaic, but was composed in Greek from the outset. (2) S. Matthew the Apostle's *Logia* consisted almost entirely of discourse-material. (3) Our Gospel cannot possibly be the *Logia* of 50 A.D. referred to by Papias, for the internal

evidence clearly indicates that our S. Matthew was not written till at least twenty years after the date named by Papias.

We know how apt tradition is to convert indirect into direct authorship. When our Gospels were at last included in the Canon of Holy Scripture, about 130—140 A.D., any piece of evidence supporting their Apostolic authorship or inspiration would instantly be welcomed and pressed into service. Thus we have seen how readily it was believed that S. Mark wrote at the dictation of S. Peter ; S. Luke, of S. Paul.

Now, those who first formed the collection of four Gospels,—and this, according to Harnack, “was done before the middle of the second century, perhaps long before,”—gave this Gospel the inscription “*according to S. Matthew.*” This title in itself shows that our first Gospel, in tone, style, and especially in its discourse-matter, was based upon and closely followed the lines of the *Matthæan Logia*. In those uncritical days, it was the easiest thing to take one short step further and call it the “*Gospel of S. Matthew.*”

In the face of the unreliability of external evidence and our ignorance of the author of the first Gospel, only one course is open to us. We must cross-examine the only witness that remains, but it is the best of all the witnesses,—the internal evidence. We must form our estimate of the value and historicity of S. Matthew's Gospel on its own merits.

We shall, therefore, analyse the contents, give an outline-sketch of the chief characteristics of the *Gospel according to S. Matthew*, and build our arguments and inferences upon that basis.

Before we do this, however, we must enter upon a troublesome but necessary digression. If we would read S. Matthew intelligently and interpret him aright, there are one or two preliminary questions that must occupy us awhile, for their investigation will throw much light upon his pages.

S. Matthew is writing as a Jew to Jews. He wants to show believing and unbelieving Jews alike that Jesus is the Messiah of Prophecy, and Himself a true Jew. Therefore, as one who is personally steeped in the spirit of Judaism, our author addresses himself to the one authority recognized by all Jews as the final court of appeal,—the “Law and the Prophets,” or the Old Testament.

But, in order to appreciate at their true value Matthew's arguments from prophecy, we must ever bear this fact in mind. Jews were in the habit of interpreting Holy Scripture in a way that often seems to us arbitrary and artificial. They constantly read into Old Testament passages a meaning and purpose quite foreign to the original intention of the inspired writer whose words they interpret. The first question, therefore, that demands our careful investigation is this :—

(a) *S. Matthew's treatment of the Old Testament.*

The Jews were a people of one book, the Old Testament, but they knew it thoroughly. Their conviction was that the Old Testament was the repository of all wisdom. It gave full information, and was the one and final court of appeal on every single topic and in every department of human activity, whether moral, political, scientific or religious. All that was needed was the patience and skill to bring out its hidden treasures.

The Jewish interpretation of Holy Scripture proceeded on various principles. The words of the Old Testament were regarded as either literal, poetical, parabolic, allegorical, mystic or symbolical. A distinguished rabbinic school employed no less than thirty-two of these methods of interpretation, some of them sound, others fantastic.

Matthew was a Jew, and like all his fellow-countrymen, he often interprets the Old Testament in what we should call a forced and artificial manner. He reads between its lines, and sees veiled and underlying meanings in a most extraordinary fashion.

In the eyes of all Christians of the first generation, the Old Testament was a fore-shadowing of Christ and the Gospel-story, a book of types and prophecy throughout. Its official personages and its saints, its ordinances and its events are real though imperfect exhibitions of Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom. Christians viewed Christ as the one end and goal to which all Old Testament history, law, prophecy, worship pointed. Old Testament charac-

ters and institutions were mere types of Him. Even the most trivial occurrences and incidental utterances were anticipations which found their realization in Christ.

This hankering after Christological interpretations of the Old Testament constantly leads to an artificial and arbitrary exegesis. Old Testament passages are treated apart from and in defiance of their historical setting, pure poetry is turned into prose, what is literal is transformed into figure of speech, and figure of speech is converted into literal fact. At times the wording of the original quotation is changed so as to secure a more complete fulfilment.

For instance, Zechariah (ix. 9) had said: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." This, of course, is the poetical Hebrew way of speaking of *one* animal, and S. Luke and S. Mark so interpret it. Matthew, however, in his eagerness to keep close to the wording of prophecy, turns the one animal into *two*! "They brought the ass, and the colt, and set Him *on them*"—ἐπάνω αὐτῶν (Matth. xxi. 7).

So, again, we read in Matth. ii. 23, "He dwelt in Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene," a prophecy which cannot be traced in the Old Testament. In spite of several ingenious but unconvincing attempts to find some parallel for it in Scripture, it is merely a play on words based on the

accidental resemblance of the word Nazareth and the Hebrew word for "branch."

In Matth. xxvii. 9 Jeremy the prophet is made to predict the giving of the thirty pieces of silver for the potter's field. To begin with, we have here a slip of the memory, for it is Zech. xi. 12, 13, and not Jeremiah, who is the prophet in question. More than this, the Evangelist has also altered the words of the prophet ("cast them unto the potter") so as to make them suit the facts he relates ("gave them for the potter's field"),^a. Moreover, the word he translates "potter" does not probably mean "potter" at all, but "treasury," though this last mistake is not Matthew's own. It was a popular misconception of the original Hebrew word, current in his day.

Similarly it is only by wrenching the original words from their true original setting and intention that the passage "when Israel was 'a child, I loved him and called my son out of Egypt" can be construed into a prophecy referring to the return of the child Jesus from Egypt: "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Matth. ii. 15).

These strained and artificial interpretations of Scripture were universal among Jews of that day,

^a cf. the anointing of our Lord's $\frac{\text{head}}{\text{feet}}$ by the woman who was a sinner. S. Luke agrees with S. John in saying that the feet, not the head, were anointed. In S. Matthew and S. Mark the feet have been changed into the head, because the Psalmist wrote: "Thou anointest my head with oil" (Ps. xxiii. 5).

and therefore perfectly legitimate and convincing in their day. They served their age; but it requires an intellectual *tour de force* for us to understand a state of mind which saw clear prophecy in such mere accidental coincidences of word or fact.

This spirit pervades the whole of the New Testament and prompts much of its actual wording. Every syllable of the Old Testament was regarded in the light of veiled or explicit prophecy, and not one jot or tittle of its foreshadowing could be unfulfilled in Christ. Scripture was divinely ordained to usher in the Gospel. Its one aim was to act as tutor to bring men to Christ. Hence it is that S. Paul finds no difficulty in allegorizing Hagar and Ishmael into the covenant of Sinai and the old Law, or Sarah and Isaac into the New Jerusalem and the new Law (Gal. iv. 22 sqq., cf. Eph. v. 32), while the Rock in the wilderness is nothing if not a type of Christ (1 Cor. x. 4). (cf. 1 Cor. x. 6, 11.)

Only in the case of our Lord's quotations do we find real historical insight and an interpretation which satisfies all modern requirements^b.

^b Only in a very few cases do our Lord's quotations raise points of difficulty, e.g. His use of God's words to Moses at the bush (Mark xii. 26); "Is it not written . . . Ye are gods" (John x. 34); His assigning Ps. cx. to David (Mark xii. 36); His allusion to Jonah's story in reference to His own Resurrection on the third day (Matth. xii. 40). "The last is probably a gloss, and the other three are *ad hominem* arguments." (Garvie.) But see Sanday, Bampton Lect., p. 414, and Gore, Bampton Lect., p. 198. In regard to the O.T., Christ shared and accepted the current views of His age.

In defence of the early Christian tendency to see prophecy in every line of the Old Testament, it may be argued that the Old Testament *does* foreshadow the New Testament. The whole development of Israel's history may be conceived as a movement towards Him in Whom all its types, hopes, aspirations were realized and found their consummation. Thus the New Testament writers would be fully justified in interpreting all Scripture Christologically. Generally speaking, this is true, but it must be candidly owned that they carried this principle too far in their application of it to minor details. Our Lord did not heal the sick, so that a prophecy of Isaiah might be fulfilled (Matth. viii. 16, 17), neither did He dwell in Nazareth because it had been prophesied He should be called a Nazarene (ii. 23), and it was not "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," that our Lord spoke in parables (Matth. xiii. 35).

The quotations in the New Testament are seldom exact, and they are drawn sometimes from the Hebrew, sometimes from the Septuagint (Greek version). In S. Matthew, it has been noted that his own quotations from the prophets are from the Hebrew or Aramaic. On the other hand, his O.T. quotations placed in the mouths of the persons mentioned in the narrative (e.g. Jesus said, Have ye never read: Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise? (cf. iii. 3, xiii. 14)) are quoted from the Septuagint.

It is almost certain that just as there were "collections of *logia* or 'sayings,'" so there were "collections of Old Testament prophecies or 'proof-texts'" (in Hebrew) containing Scripture passages specially bearing on the Gospel-story. From these most of our New Testament quotations are drawn.

(b) In reading S. Matthew, we have not only to bear in mind the peculiar method of interpreting Scripture then in vogue, but we must orientalize ourselves in another direction as well. We must look at *Matthew's attitude to the Mosaic Law* through Jewish eyes.

We do not always sufficiently grasp the fact that Jewish Christians were essentially Jews as well as Christians. They were Jews whose religious views differed from those of other Jews in little else except that they accepted Christ as the long-promised Messiah of prophecy. In the constant feud between Judaizers and Paulinists; in the shock S. Peter received when he was told of God to go to the Gentile centurion (Acts x.); in the *agenda* of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.); in the rebuke administered by S. Paul to S. Peter at Antioch (Gal. ii.), we clearly see that Jewish Christians still continued to regard the obligations of the Mosaic Law as binding upon themselves.

This reverence for the Mosaic Law runs all through Matthew. He is at immense pains to prove to his fellow-countrymen that our Lord was nothing if not a Law-abiding Jew. He not only echoes

S. Luke's words that not one jot or tittle of the Law shall be unfulfilled, but it is Matthew alone who adds: "whosoever shall break one of these least commandments," &c. (v. 19, 20).

Indeed, so eager is Matthew to remove Jewish prejudice against our Lord in this matter of the Law that he rewrites Mark's passages on divorce, clean and unclean meats, &c., and makes them assume quite a different complexion.

Thus, as regards divorce, S. Mark and S. Luke represent Christ as making the marriage-tie absolutely indissoluble. S. Matthew, by adding the words "except for fornication," brings our Lord's verdict on Deut. xxiv. into perfect harmony with the best Jewish views of His day.

In the matter of clean and unclean meats, S. Mark has laid great stress on Christ's utterance, "purging all meats." He so words the whole passage that we clearly understand our Lord to teach that the distinctions of the Mosaic Law between clean and unclean meats are cancelled. S. Matthew, on the other hand, omits the clause "purging all meats" altogether, and closes our Lord's utterance with the words: "but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man." Thus he leaves the impression on the reader's mind that the whole question at issue was not one of "clean or unclean meats,"—a matter on which all Jews and even a Christian S. Peter (Acts x., Gal. ii.) felt strongly,—but merely a question of the traditional "washing of hands."

Once more, it is Matthew alone who mentions :

“pray that your flight be not on the Sabbath-day,” thus assuring the Jews that they have misunderstood our Lord on the subject of Sabbath-breaking, for He insisted on its rigid observance.

No doubt S. Matthew records our Lord’s own words. At times we may detect a tendency to take our Lord’s sayings too literally or to over-emphasize them. His artificial groupings and occasional slight modifications of the actual words may also give our Lord’s utterances here and there a meaning which Christ did not originally intend to convey. But S. Matthew always speaks and writes from deep inward conviction. All we wish to imply is that, in reading the first Gospel, we must remember that S. Matthew was first and foremost a Christian but also a confirmed Jew. He did not for a moment entertain the idea that Christ had abrogated the obligations of the Mosaic Law.

(c) Only one other preliminary point do we intend to examine in the first Gospel: *Matthew’s Discourses*.

We have already spoken at some length, in the preceding chapter, on S. Luke’s and S. Matthew’s use of the *Logia*. Till comparatively recently, it would have been dangerous to hint that the discourses of our Lord in the Evangelists were not uttered exactly as they stand in our Gospels: e.g. the “Sermon on the Mount.” Even popular opinion nowadays, however, is gradually coming round to the view which scholars have long since entertained.

A comparison of the two accounts of our Lord's "Great Sermon" (Matth. v., vi., vii.; Luke vi. 20 sqq.) at once proves that the two versions cannot be harmonized. There is a common foundation or nucleus which may well represent the base-idea of the actual Sermon. Both versions, however, are probably "conflations," or mosaics. Several sayings of our Lord, of allied meaning but independently uttered on different occasions, are grouped together so as to form one discourse. It is more than open to question whether any of the longer discourses of our Lord recorded in our Gospels faithfully reproduce Him. The sayings are Christ's, but the grouping is man's composition, and the connecting-links are artificial and often clearly discernible.

CHAPTER XIX.

S. MATTHEW (CONTINUED.)

Argumenti.

LEADING ideas in S. Matthew. (1) The Gospel of Prophecy. All threads of Old Testament prophecy are gathered together in Christ. (2) The Gospel of the Kingdom. Jesus is the promised Messianic King, the "Son of Man." Matthew's eschatology. (3) The Gospel of the New Law. Matthew's attitude to the Mosaic Law. The Law of the Kingdom as applied to (*a*) the citizens of the Kingdom, (*b*) the preachers of the Kingdom, (*c*) the Church as a corporate body. Why the Kingdom is taken away from the false Judaism and given to the true Israel (Christian Church). Ecclesiasticism of S. Matthew. Its theology and historicity examined. Style of S. Matthew. By whom, for what readers, and when was S. Matthew written? Recapitulation. "*The Gospel*" is one and not fourfold, and mainly Apostolic in its origin.

CHAPTER XIX.

S. MATTHEW (*continued*).

*Leading ideas
in S. Matthew.* { 1. Christ as the promised Messiah
of prophecy.
2. Christ as the promised King.
3. Christ as Law-Giver—the true
Moses.

(1) *S. Matthew, the Gospel of Prophecy.* The Evangelist begins his book with the words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

His object is to show the unbelieving and calumniating Jews, as well as others, that Jesus is the Messiah of Prophecy, the promised King of David's line. He therefore proceeds to prove, from the outset, that in Christ are gathered together all the threads of prophecy. Christ, and Christ alone, fulfils to the letter every single word in the Old Testament that can in any way be interpreted Messianically.

Thus the watchword of S. Matthew's Gospel is: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet" (e.g. i. 22; ii. 15, 17, 23; iii. 3; iv. 14; viii. 17; xii. 17; xiii. 14, 15; xxi. 4; xxvi. 56; xxvii. 9). Matthew detects in the Old Testament clear predictions even of the merest details in our

Lord's Life. This scheme pervades the whole book. He accumulates a whole series of wondrous coincidences round the Birth and Life of Christ all foretold plainly or in dark sayings in the Old Testament, if only the Jews to whom the prophecies were addressed had had eyes to see, or ears to hear.

A brief summary of our Lord's Life, drawn from this Gospel, will help to show how completely Matthew finds prediction realized in Christ.

Jesus is *born of a virgin* (i. 22, cf. Is. vii. 14) *in Bethlehem* (ii. 6, cf. Mic. v. 2), and as a child *returns from Egypt* (ii. 15, cf. Hos. xi. 1). *Herod slays the Innocents*, as had been foretold (ii. 17, cf. Jer. xxxi. 15). Christ dwells in Nazareth (ii. 23, cf. ??). John the Baptist *prepares the way for Him* (iii. 3, Is. xl. 3). Jesus begins His work in Galilee and dwells at Capernaum (iv. 14, 15, cf. Is. ix. 1, 2), so that the land of Zabulon and Nephthalim, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sit in darkness, see a great light. He heals the sick, thus Himself *taking our infirmities, and bearing our sicknesses* (viii. 16, 17, cf. Is. liii. 4). He is the *Servant of the Lord, gentle and meek, Who does not strive nor cry* (xii. 17 sqq., cf. Is. xlii. 1 sqq.). He *opens His mouth in parables* (xiii. 13, cf. Ps. lxxviii. 2; Is. vi. 9, 10). He *enters Jerusalem meek, and sitting upon an ass, and the colt the foal of an ass* (xxi. 5, cf. Zech. ix. 9, and Is. lxii. 11), and, as Ps. cxviii. 26 had predicted, is hailed with the words: "*Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord*" (xxi. 9). That the scriptures

might be fulfilled (xxvii. 54), He is *rejected*, and *betrayed* and *forsaken by His disciples* (xxvi. 31 and 56; cf. Zech. xiii. 7). *With the thirty pieces of silver*, the price of His betrayal, *is bought the potter's field* (xxvii. 8, 9; cf. Zech. xi. 12, 13). *His garments are parted, and upon His vesture they cast lots* (xxvii. 35; cf. Ps. xxii. 18).

In all these instances, S. Matthew refers expressly to prophecy by name. But there are, over and above this, an immense number of *allusions* to prophecy without any express reference to it: e.g. in chapter xxvii. 26 sqq.: Jesus is scourged (Is. l. 6 and liii. 5), mocked (cf. Ps. lxix. 19, 20), spat upon (Is. l. 6). They give Him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall (Ps. lxix. 21). He is numbered with the transgressors (Is. liii. 12), passers by wag their heads at Him and revile Him (cf. Ps. xxii. 7; cix. 25; xxxv. 15). The sun is darkened (Am. viii. 9). As Ps. xxii. 1 had foretold, our Lord cries out: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? The dead rise from their graves (Is. xxvi. 19; cf. xxv. 8 and Hos. xiii. 14). Christ makes His grave with the rich in His death (Is. liii. 9).

S. Matthew is steeped to the lips in his Old Testament. Indeed, at times, he gives the impression of adapting his narrative to its wording in his zeal to detect fulfilment of Scripture everywhere.

(2) *S. Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom of heaven.*

Christ is the promised King, lineally descended through David from Abraham (I. i.). He is, however, not a mere earthly King, for He is also the Son of God, born of a Virgin by the operation of the Holy Spirit, as Isaiah had prophesied (i. 23)^a. Matthew reminds unbelieving Jews that the Jesus Whom they reject because He does not fulfil their carnal expectations, even Gentile Wise Men from the East hail as the royal Heir of David's Throne (ii. 2), and bring Him their tributes of gold, frankincense and myrrh. He is not a mere son of David, for David himself calls Him Lord (xxii. 43; cf. Ps. cx. 1). Not only Gentile Magi, but their own Jewish prophet John the Baptist, the "Elias that should first come," had borne witness to Christ as the Divine Messiah-King (iii. 1—3, 11, 12, 16, 17); so did Pilate, when he wrote over Christ's head on the Cross: *This is Jesus the King of the Jews* (xxvii. 37).

One of the main aims of S. Matthew is to convince unbelieving Jews that they have all along misunderstood Jesus. He is the true King, the full "blossoming of Israel's prophetic ideal of the Messiah-King, ruling

^a It has been suggested by Zahn, with some plausibility, that, in his Genealogy, Matthew also gives an answer to Jewish calumny. The humble birth and the alleged virgin-birth of our Lord gave rise to Jewish scandal. Matthew shows by the instances of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba, how humble women had figured in royal Jewish history, and how God had overruled even adverse circumstances for good; also that the royal Davidic line had had its vicissitudes.

in righteousness, and in wondrous gentleness too." It was their false, earthly, material Messianic ideal that had made the Jews as a nation reject this true King, when He came to His own. S. Matthew therefore writes his Gospel to correct the false Messianic expectations of his fellow-countrymen. He shows them that the Messiah of Prophecy is not an earthly conquering King, but One Who is a Servant, meek, lowly, suffering, dying, Whose reign is heavenly, not earthly, a King Who rules by love and not by force.

But it would be a grave mistake to fancy that S. Matthew entirely spiritualizes the Kingdom of Heaven. He shares the Messianic eschatological expectations of his generation. He is as convinced as any Jew of his day that the "Son of Man" is very speedily coming to establish His Kingdom. He is very soon "to come on the clouds of Heaven," "sit upon His Throne of Glory"; "all power is given Him in heaven and in earth"; "He shall judge all men," "divide the good from the bad," "reward each according to his deeds," and "rule with the good in righteousness."

The date of this Coming is known only to the Father (xxiv. 36). A period of great tribulation will precede it (xxiv. 6 sqq.). Then the Son of Man will appear suddenly like lightning on the clouds of heaven (xxiv. 27—30), and send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather together the elect from all quarters (31). All nations shall be

gathered together (xxv. 32) before their Judge. His disciples will be Christ's assessors on that Day, "sitting upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (xix. 28). The righteous shall reign with their King in righteousness; the bad are cast into Gehenna (xxiv. 33—46).

Christ had clearly foretold that this "Day of the Lord" should not be in His own Lifetime. He must ascend the Throne of His Glory through the portals of Death. But their Lord's Coming was to be in His followers' lifetime, so they understood Him to say (xvi. 28; xxiv. 34; x. 23: "ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come")^b.

Meanwhile, the King's disciples must preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to all nations (x. 7; xxiv. 14),^c baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (xxviii. 19). The citizens of the Kingdom, including many from the north and south, the east and west, are the true Israel of God, the Church of the King in Whom "all the families of the earth are blessed," as distinguished from the false Israel of a degenerate Judaism.

^b Christ may well have wished that His Return should be, as it has been, the soul's pole-star of His true followers in every age, and purposely left the period of His Coming vague, veiled in language conveying to His hearers' minds the impression that it was to be very soon.

^c S. Matth. x. 5, 6; 23 show, according to S. Matthew, that our Lord had in view for his disciples (a) a *present* ministry to the *Jews only*, as well as (b) an *ulterior* ministry to the whole world (xxiv. 14, xxviii. 19).

We shall see, in our next section, that the King has also promulgated a new Law for His Kingdom and His Church. S. Matthew formulates it for us in the Sermon on the Mount, and in Christ's Mission-Charge to the Twelve. Like King, like people. Even as the true Messiah is meek, lowly, gentle, suffering, loving, so must His subjects be lowly in spirit, pure in heart, merciful, rejoicing in persecution, and full of compassion; while the Church must not only be the light and leaven of the earth, but spread the glad tidings of the Kingdom among all nations. Both the citizens of the Kingdom, and the Church itself, must "watch and be ready," fixing their eyes on things above, eagerly looking for the Coming of the Messiah-King to bring all things to perfection.

This was the conception S. Matthew entertained of the King and His Kingdom. According to the first Evangelist, so far as we can judge, the scene of this Kingdom was to be the present earth, renewed, regenerated, transfigured. Christ may not have intended to convey the meaning, in every instance, that the author of the first Gospel places upon His words,—Christ's words, as originally spoken, may have occasionally taught something totally different,—but this is how S. Matthew interpreted our Lord's utterances.

(3) *S. Matthew, the Gospel of the New Law.*

Deuteronomy xviii. 15—17 had foretold that "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from

the midst of thee, like unto thee (Moses), and will put His words in His mouth, and He shall speak all that I shall command Him." S. Matthew (cf. S. John i. 45 ; vi. 14) is convinced that Jesus is of a truth that Prophet of which Moses spake in the Law. Christ is a new and a greater Moses, Who has come to fill up (πληρῶσαι) the faint sketch of the Law,—to give a new Law to men endowed with a new spirit. In the Sermon on the Mount of S. Matthew, we have the counterpart of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. The first Evangelist is so conscious of the fact that he constantly sets the one over against the other, by way of contrast, with his repeated: "It hath been said to them of old . . . but *I* say unto you." We shall see that this formula, in which Christ asserts His authority to transcend the old Law, is peculiar to S. Matthew, and possibly one of his editorial innovations. But it is significant, for it gives us a valuable clue to S. Matthew's own outlook and attitude to the old Law.

In the previous chapter, we saw that S. Matthew was most loyal to the Mosaic Law. He is always at immense pains to remove the prejudices of the Jews against our Lord in this matter, to prove to them that our Lord Himself was nothing if not a Law-abiding Jew. But Matthew was equally convinced in his own mind that, without in any way trampling upon or abolishing the Old Law, Christ had entirely reformed it. He had so developed and transfigured it that, in His hands, the Mosaic Law

had been transformed into a new and far higher law.

To Matthew, Moses is the imperfect type, Christ the perfect fulfilment; Sinai is the foreshadowing of the Mount; Jesus is the Law-giver of the true Israel and far greater than Moses; the Sermon on the Mount is the flower of which the Decalogue was the bare seed. But there is no snapping of the threads connecting the old with the new. Christ has come, not to destroy, but to fulfil; not to cancel the old Law, but to fill it full of a new meaning and a new spirit quickening it into fresh and active life. The new Table of the Law for Christians does not make the two old tables null and void. On the contrary, it makes them ever so much more binding: "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

What, then, according to S. Matthew, are the new principles and rules of the New Law of Christ for the citizens of His Kingdom? We can be at no loss for an answer. S. Matthew has carefully collected them for us in his groups of discourses. When we examine them later more closely, we shall see that a comparison with Mark and Luke reveals a new element—an ecclesiastical factor—in S. Matthew. He constantly interprets our Lord's utterances in the light of the experience and needs of the Christian Church of his own generation. For the present, however, we shall content ourselves with a bare

analysis of the Law of the Kingdom as presented in the Matthæan groups.

Law of the Kingdom.

A. Matth. v., vi., vii.—The "Sermon on the Mount."

(1) *The New Law for the citizens of the Kingdom.*

Character. In the Beatitudes we have the eight traits which go to form the character of the members of the Kingdom of Heaven. In the "Golden Rule" (v. 44) is struck the key-note of the New Law, and we at once discover that its ruling principle is the unfeigned love of a sincere and pure heart, ever ready to serve others and blot out self.

Conduct. Christ not only teaches that Love, active Love, is the alpha and omega of His New Law, He shows us how we can leaven the Old Law with this new principle and quicken it into life. He takes one commandment of the old Decalogue after another and shows us how to keep the old law in the new way, in spirit and in truth, inwardly as well as outwardly, probing beneath the surface of the old teaching on murder, adultery and so forth, right to the heart of the moral ideal there set before us.

(2) *The new Law for the visible Kingdom of Heaven on earth.* In S. Matthew, far more than in S. Mark or S. Luke, the Kingdom of Heaven approaches the modern idea of the visible Church, or Society of the members of Christ's Kingdom here

on earth^d. In S. Matthew vi. we are told what are the fundamental principles which should guide the Church in her life of piety. To obey is better than sacrifice, and heart-service is better than any amount of outward ceremonial. Here again, love unfeigned is the end of the commandment and the fulfilling of the Law. A secret and modest goodness of heart is better than all scrupulous and ostentatious observance of religious rules. As an object-lesson, Christ illustrates this principle in the case of alms, fasting and prayer. The parables at the end of the "Sermon" prove that creed and life, precept and practice, must go hand in hand.

B. Chap. x. *The ordination and Mission Charge.*

In the Sermon on the Mount S. Matthew placed before us the principles which should guide the Church in her services. Here we find rules for her guidance in her missionary-work, the *raison d'être* of her existence. Christ commands his disciples to begin with the Jews before they go to the Gentiles, and "as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The labourer is worthy of his hire, and the missionary has the right to demand and expect the ungrudging hospitality of those amongst whom, and for whom, he works. Therefore they are

^d The ecclesiastical colouring is patent in S. Matthew, e.g. (a) The custody of the keys (xvi. 19); (b) The famous baptismal formula (xxviii. 19); (c) The thrice repeated term "Church" (ἐκκλησία) (xvi. 18; xviii. 17)—are all peculiar to this Gospel.

to take nothing with them for their journey. After giving them these rules for their conduct, Christ warns them of the persecution and hardships that await them. He, however, assures them of God's protection, and that if they are ready to confess Him before men, to lay down their lives for His sake, they shall in no wise lose their reward.

In x. 23, S. Matthew reports our Lord as saying : "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come."

C. Chap. xiii. *The parables of the Kingdom.*

These deal with the planting and growth of the Church. Not all who hear the glad tidings of the Kingdom, as it is preached among men, have hearts prepared to receive the good news. Therefore the Church must expect much of its sowing to yield no apparent fruit ("*Sower*"). But we must not judge results here and now, for it is not in man's power to say who are good wheat and who are bad tares in the visible Church. The King is coming speedily, and He will gather and remove the wicked out of His Kingdom, so that the righteous alone may reign with Him ("*Tares*"). The Church will grow rapidly and eventually embrace all nations ("*Mustard seed*"). But it is the inward penetrating spirit more than the outward superficial increase in numbers that betokens healthy growth and shows that the Gospel of the Kingdom has struck deep root into human society ("*Leaven*"). Men with receptive hearts value the

glad tidings of the Kingdom as good news of priceless worth, and are capable of great sacrifices for its sake (*"Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price"*). It is the Church's duty to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to good and bad alike, without exception. The King and His angels will separate the good from the bad at the Coming of the Son of Man to inaugurate His Kingdom (*"The Drag-Net"*).

D. Chap. xviii. *Duty of the members of the Kingdom to weaker brethren.*

The King tenderly loves His "little ones." There are "little ones" in the Kingdom as well as in the family, and the King watches over these weak babes with a jealous care. Anyone in the Church who slights or in any way hurts these "little ones" in the faith, or the "little ones" in character (outcasts) is a "stumbling-block" and doing untold harm, impeding "the coming of the Kingdom." We must deal very gently with the lambs or stray sheep, as well as with all who sin against ourselves. Charity is the Law of the Kingdom, and we must do all in our power to be reconciled with our brother who offends against us. We should first approach him privately in a loving spirit; if this fails, our next step is to try and effect a reconciliation through our mutual friends; as a last resource we must appeal to the Church to heal the breach. Above all things, the citizens of the Kingdom should live in a spirit of unbounded forgiveness one toward another, so that

when the King takes account with His servants on that Day we may obtain that mercy which we ourselves have extended to others.

S. Matth. xviii. 17 sqq. represents Christ as making the Church a supreme court of appeal, with absolute disciplinary powers. More than this, Christ, Who is ever present "where two or three are gathered together in His Name," promises to ratify all the decisions of His Church, as if the sentence had been passed by Himself.

E. Chap. xxiii. *Why the Kingdom has been taken away from the false Israel and given to the true Judaism.*

Taken in connection with the parables of the "wicked husbandmen," and the "King's wedding feast" (xxi., xxii.), we see in this discourse that the Jews are outside the Kingdom of Heaven because they abused or spurned the great privileges granted them as God's peculiar and chosen people. In the "Woes," Christ shows that the scribes and Pharisees display a spirit of pride and self-seeking diametrically opposed to the unselfish love which is the note of the citizens of the Kingdom. They are canting hypocrites, who "say, and do not." They are exacting towards others but very lenient to themselves, covetous and ambitious to a degree, blind leaders of the blind, preachers of a demoralizing religion, straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel,

whited sepulchres outwardly fair but inwardly full of rottenness, a race of vipers who have stung and killed the prophets sent to save them. They call themselves Moses' representatives, but they have shamefully betrayed their trust. Therefore their house is left unto them desolate, and, at the King's Coming, how can they escape the damnation of hell?

F. Chaps. xxiv., xxv. *The Coming of the King.*

At the beginning of this chapter (§ 2), we have already analysed this great eschatological discourse. On the appointed "day of the Lord," known only to the Father, the Son of Man is to come suddenly like lightning, in His Glory, to judge the world. All nations will be gathered before the King; He will gather out the bad, cast them into outer darkness, and reign with the righteous in His perfect Kingdom.

The greatest stress is laid on the great crisis of distress preceding the Coming, and the terrible trials in store for Christians.

Conclusions. In these five discourses S. Matthew expounds the new Law of the Kingdom, or Church of God.

He formulates the clear and definite duties of the individual Christian as to the formation of his character, his conduct in daily life, his duty to God and to his neighbour.

For the Apostles, and other ministers of God's

Word, S. Matthew gives us their "breviary" in Christ's ordination Charge.

For the Church, as a corporate body, he has words of exhortation, warning and encouragement. S. Matthew lays particular stress on the Church's missionary-work, its chief privilege and duty, but he also gives it clear instructions respecting the proper performance of its religious services, its disciplinary powers and its pastoral work. He reminds the Church of its exalted and authoritative position, its high functions, the constant presence of God in His Church, God's promise to ratify its decisions.

By way of warning, S. Matthew faithfully places on record the causes which have led to the rejection of the Jewish Church. He also comforts the Church of God in its present evil days of trial and persecution, by reminding it that Christ had clearly foretold this time of trouble. He bids Christians be of good courage, to watch and be ready, to endure to the end, for the very trials they deplore are "signs of the times" pointing to the speedy Return of the King to gather His own unto Himself.

Thus, in S. Matthew, we already see a fully organized Christian Church, with canon laws of its own. The Apostles have plenary absolving and disciplinary authority. S. Peter's position and authority, in particular, is almost supreme. S. Matthew displays the greatest reverence for the person of S. Peter.

e.g. Matth. xvi. 18 : "*Thou art Peter, and upon this*

rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give *unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, and whatsoever *thou* shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever *thou* shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven^e."

It is in S. Matthew, again, that we find the first beginnings of the formularies of the Catholic Church in the baptismal formula contained in xxviii. 19: "teach all nations, *baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*"

S. Matthew is essentially a "Church" Gospel. The instinct of the Church in all ages,—Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Nonconformist alike—has seized upon the first Evangelist's Gospel-story as the Gospel most to its liking.

Harnack rightly says: "The Gospel of S. Matthew is not the least a book which reflects the views of one man or of a small circle. It was compiled for the use of the Church. It may be called the first liturgical book of the Christian Church. Hence even the Gentile Church, as soon as it became a teaching Church, preferred the Jewish S. Matthew to its own S. Luke. Wherein lies the strength of S. Matthew?"

^e S. Matthew also gives us two other new facts about S. Peter: (a) his walking on the sea (xiv. 28 sqq.) and (b) the tribute-money incident (xvii. 24 sqq.). In the latter, the words "*for me and thee*" (excluding the other Apostles) seem again to give prominence to Peter.

It answers all the requirements of the universal Church. (1) It is an apologetic Gospel with replies to the opponents of Christianity. (2) It alone has a distinct interest in teaching as such. (3) S. Matthew instructs, he proves, but all the while he keeps the Church well in the foreground" (*"Luke the Physician,"* 167 sqq.).

Theology of S. Matthew. Like all Jews, he is essentially practical; therefore, apart from the ecclesiastical colouring, there are few questions of dogma. S. Matthew is a Gospel of Christian character and conduct. The first evangelist is a masterly teacher of morality, who places before us a kind of practical code for the guidance of Christians in general.

The only two passages which lay any emphasis on the atoning significance of our Lord's Death are incidental rather than fundamental. They merely prove what has been said more than once before, that dogmatic theology in Jewish Christianity is conspicuous by its absence. S. Matthew xx. 28, "The Son of Man came to minister, and give His life a ransom for many": and xxvi. 21, "My blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins;" are the only two verses which reflect anything approaching to the Pauline system of theology.

Historicity of S. Matthew. S. Matthew is deservedly the most valued of the Synoptists by reason

of the excellence of his teaching. From a historical point of view, however, he is far inferior to S. Mark, and perhaps of less value than even S. Luke for a reconstruction of the facts of the Ministry. Many causes contribute to this defect. Writing from a particular standpoint, S. Matthew enjoys all the benefits of his perspective; at the same time, he is subject to the limitations it involves. His chief interest lies in Prophecy and teaching. His predilection for seeing Old Testament prophecy everywhere makes him frequently diverge from his original sources of information; so does the pronounced didactic tendency of this doctrinal gospel.

S. Matthew is a born teacher. For practical teaching purposes he naturally classifies his material according to its subject-matter, massing together into groups utterances or parables of our Lord which are allied in meaning. In this way, he forms one continuous logical sermon or discourse out of sayings of Christ which were originally independent and separate stories. These artificial groupings are admirably adapted for didactic purposes, but they dislocate S. Mathew's narrative and the true chronological order of events. Hence his didactic, apologetic, and ecclesiastical scheme naturally influences and colours his narrative, and we cannot trust him historically as we do a S. Mark who has no such ulterior purposes to serve.

In other ways, S. Matthew is less historical than S. Mark. Not only does he (*a*) adapt his narrative

to the ecclesiastical needs of his day : (*b*) introduce editorial changes here and there, correcting his original sources in his zeal to bring them nearer to Old Testament prophecy ; but (*c*) he represents the latest cycle of Apostolic tradition. We see traces of this in some of the new facts which S. Matthew introduces into the narrative of the Passion. S. Matthew is our sole authority for :—the dream of Pilate's wife ; the washing of Pilate's hands ; the appearance of saints risen from their graves after the death of Jesus and seen walking in the streets of Jerusalem ; the story of the Guard at the Tomb and the sealing of the Grave ; the purchase of the potter's field with Judas' thirty pieces of silver. His new facts also include the coin in the mouth of the fish, the walking of S. Peter on the sea, the genealogy and infancy details. Once more, in the Resurrection scene, the "young man" of S. Mark has become "an angel from heaven" of dazzling brightness, who rolls away the stone, "and for fear of whom the keepers did shake and fell back as dead men." The great fear of the women (S. Mark xvi. 8) has also been toned down into "with fear and *great joy*" ; while S. Mark's "neither said they anything to any man," has now become "and they did run to bring His disciples word."

Style of S. Matthew. His Greek is rather better than S. Mark's, but not good. Matthew's style generally is very prosaic. He has none of the vivid

imagery or freshness of colouring, none of the poetry or feeling of S. Mark's simple naive art or S. Luke's conscious word-pictures. In a sense, however, Matthew is a skilful artist. He knows well how to arrange the scattered material of his original sources in a way to set before his readers a literary whole, consistent and complete. His narrative may be deficient in movement and colour but there is a decided unity of purpose running through it all. He is, above all else, an apologist.

He has also a strange predilection for the number seven, a sacred Hebrew number. Thus he gives us seven petitions in his version of the Lord's Prayer; seven parables of the Kingdom; seven Beatitudes. The generations from Abraham to Christ are six times seven; S. Peter is told to forgive up to "seventy times seven," &c. (cf. Matth. xii. 45; xxii. 25; xv. 34—37).

By whom, and for what readers, was S. Matthew written? The internal evidence clearly proves that the first Gospel was written by a Jew for Jews. For him, as for them, the Hebrew Scriptures are the final court of appeal. His one aim is to convince his fellow-countrymen, out of their own Old Testament, that Jesus is the Messiah of prophecy. The purely Jewish mould in which Matthew's great Eschatological Discourse is cast also indicates that the author is a Jew in full sympathy with current Jewish Messianic expectations. Indeed, throughout the Gospel,

we see that Matthew largely shares the hopes and antipathies of the Jews. He endorses their belief in the obligations of the Mosaic Law. Like them, he is still under the impression that "salvation is of the Jews," though eager to welcome Gentiles into the true Israel as proselytes of the Jewish Christian Church (cf. Matth. x. 5, 6, and xviii. 17¹).

Date. The fully-organized development of the Christian Church at the time of the composition of S. Matthew points to a late date. The references to the destruction of Jerusalem in the great Eschatological Discourse also prove that this Gospel was written some years after that event, and the internal evidence generally supports this view.

In favour of an early date after the Fall of Jerusalem is the expression in x. 23: "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come."

On the other hand, the use of the phrase, "up to this day" (e.g. xxvii. 8; xxviii. 15), and the late baptismal formula of xxviii. 19 point to a comparatively late date. Probably 75-80 A.D. covers all the facts.

¹ cf. S. Mark vi. 10, which sets no bounds to the mission of the Twelve, with S. Matth. x. 5, 6, 23, where it is expressly limited to the "lost sheep of Israel." cf. also Jesus' words to the Syrophenician woman in Mark vii. 27, "Let the children *first* be filled"; with Matth. xv. 24, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of Israel." As a Jew, Matthew still thinks it is only as Jewish proselytes that Gentiles can enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Recapitulation.

A review of the three Synoptists leaves the impression that S. Mark is the Evangelist who most truly brings us "back to Christ." His narrative may look more like an unstudied outline-sketch than a completed history, but it brings us nearest to the primitive form of oral tradition, while his simple statement of fact, without any comment, preaches Christ better than any amount of theological interpretations. At the same time we cannot possibly do without S. Luke's Gospel of the Saviour of Sinners or S. Matthew's "Teaching of Jesus."

After all, the instinct of the Church is right in recognizing one Gospel and not four Gospels. If we want a complete Portrait of the Christ we must look to "the Gospel," and not to any individual Gospel exclusively. S. Mark makes known to us the Christ "in part," so does S. Matthew, so does S. Luke, so does S. John. We must unconsciously blend and combine them if we would gain that complete portraiture which, through the fourfold Gospel, the Divine Providence has designed to convey to the mind of the Church.

Thus only does the record stand four-square to every wind that blows, solidly built on a bed-rock foundation that no amount of adverse criticism can shake. Now as ever, if we will but focus our gaze on the spirit and substance of "the Gospel" and not on its letter and minor details, we may safely trust

a record broad-based upon the willing acceptance of the primitive Church and endorsed by the witness of the Holy Spirit in our own hearts.

As we have seen, the bulk (two-thirds, at least) of the Synoptic Gospel-story goes back to 50 A.D. and earlier, that is to say, within twenty years of our Lord's Death. If our analysis of the second Gospel is correct, it requires no stretch of the imagination to see in S. Mark the Memoirs of S. Peter. Similarly, in the common discourse-material of S. Matthew and S. Luke we have S. Matthew the Apostle's collection of the sayings of Jesus. In all probability, it is simply because the first and third Evangelists enshrined the *Logia* so completely in their own work that the Matthæan collection is lost to us in its original form. There was no further need for it when its "sayings of Jesus" were combined in these two Gospels with the description of our Lord's Ministry as given by S. Mark. The new work was more complete and naturally superseded the original *Logia*.

Therefore in the main portion of the Synoptic story we have the sketch of the Life of Jesus of Nazareth, the Portrait of the Son of God even as the Apostolic eye-witnesses have drawn it. It is a Portrait of such incomparable moral beauty that it is the best witness to its own truthfulness.

CHAPTER XX.

S. JOHN—INTRODUCTORY—THE
PROBLEM STATED.

Argument.

STRIKING contrast between the Fourth and Synoptic Gospels. Idealization in S. John. Why the author of S. John omits the Birth, Baptism, Temptation, Transfiguration and Agony. His superhuman Christ. Everything and everyone, in this Gospel, subordinated to the majestic central Figure. All minor details are eliminated. There is movement but no development in the narrative. Judæa, and no longer Galilee, is the scene of action. The scene, incidents and *dramatis personæ* are unfamiliar. Can this be the work of S. John the Apostle, an eyewitness? Importance of the question of authorship.

CHAPTER XX.

S. JOHN—INTRODUCTORY—THE PROBLEM STATED.

ON no other question, probably, has modern criticism been so puzzled and so self-contradictory in its verdict as on the origin and historical value of the fourth Gospel. We cannot wonder at it, for the book itself is a perfect enigma. No other Gospel is so fresh, natural, simple, so full of charm and sweetness, yet under the semblance of transparent simplicity it hides unfathomable depths ^a. So marvellously natural and delicate are the Evangelist's touches, his details are so lifelike that in his pages the past springs into life, yet we soon discover that our author reads history as a seer to whom the ideal is the only real ^b.

When we pass from the Synoptists to S. John we are in such a totally different atmosphere that the contrast could hardly be more complete. We are in another world. In one point, both John and they agree. All four Evangelists alike place Christ's sublime Figure at the very centre of their canvas. But, in the Synoptists, we feel that the scene is on

^a "The still waters run deep, flowing along with the easiest words, but the profoundest meaning" (*Herder*).

^b "To S. John, history is the invisible translated into the visible" (*Haupt*).

earth. Earth is our Lord's home, for the moment. His acts and Life are bounded awhile by our lower horizon.

In John, on the other hand, we are ever conscious of Eternity. The Son of God moves in and out among men even as He does in the other Gospels, yet He acts and speaks as if He were in Heaven. He looks upon all things in the calmness of the perfect and eternal Light. He is altogether glorified, transfigured. He passes through the midst of men like a being from another world (cf. Luke iv. 30), on this earth yet not of it.

If we may be allowed the simile, the portraits in the Synoptists are photographs, in John they are the idealized pictures of an impressionist painter. The Synoptists show us the God-Man as He outwardly appeared in the Flesh during the three years of His earthly Ministry among men. The fourth Gospel has caught the impression of the inner, real, eternal Christ Whom the Evangelist saw and understood at the Transfiguration, when our Lord revealed Himself as He truly is. From that moment, S. John's motto, like S. Paul's, is : " Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." Therefore, from the very first, in S. John's

" For the sake of brevity we shall use the term "S. John" to express the author of the fourth Gospel, though this fact still remains to be proved. Every student in quest of strong pleas, both external and internal, in support of the view,—which still holds its ground,—that the Fourth Gospel is the actual work of S. John the Apostle, should read Godet's "S. John's Gospel," also Westcott's (1908),

picture, we see the Christ invested with the aureole of Divine Messianic splendour.

The Synoptists have told us of "earthly things," John tells us of "heavenly things." They have viewed the Life from without inwards, he views it from within outwards. Even though their interest was not purely historical, the Synoptists have used the historical facts of our Lord's earthly Life as the bed-rock on which they have built their whole spiritual edifice. S. John takes no interest at all in the bare facts of history as such. He interprets the facts in the light of the eternal ideas which are the only absolute realities. He lights up these facts from above and from within, and so brings out their full and hidden significance^d.

It may make our meaning clearer if we turn from abstract generalizations to concrete instances. We shall have to dwell on the whole subject again later, so we need only hint at the main points here.

and Sanday. Godet's is not quite "up to date," and occasionally rhetorical, but it is still in many ways the best work, and generally excellent.

^d We shall deal more fully later with S. John's idealization, but, to avoid misunderstanding, we may at once define the term. Every great historical fact is the expression of some idea which constitutes its soul and makes it intelligible. Thus we might say that the leading idea of Luther was to reform the Church. The raying of an idea across a biography does not impair its historical character or resolve it into a romance, *unless the idea is thrust upon the facts and does not naturally spring from them*. S. John's *Logos* idea, *if it is true to fact*, does not make the Fourth Gospel less historical than the other three. Each of them has its ruling idea, and this feature is not peculiar to S. John. S. Mark, equally with S. John, is expressly written with an edifying purpose. Its motto might well be S. John xv. 31.

(a) In S. John, there is no mention of the Virgin Birth, nor of Christ's Baptism by the Baptist, no Temptation, no Transfiguration, no Agony. They no longer possess their Synoptic significance to one whose eyes have been opened to see Christ as He is. Behind or beneath the historical Jesus, S. John sees the spiritual eternal Christ, the Divine Word, pre-existent from all eternity, pre-eminent above all that is in Heaven or in earth.

There is no Virgin Birth, because the "Word was made Flesh" seems to S. John's mind a far truer and more adequate expression of the Incarnation than the Immaculate Conception as given in S. Matthew.

There is no Baptism, for the true Baptism is the Incarnation of the Word. There is no Temptation, because John knew that our Lord's description of it was a symbolical and parabolic word-picture, while the current material presentation of the scene in the wilderness conveyed a wrong impression, derogatory to our Lord's Divinity.

In S. John, we have no allusion to one solitary day of Transfiguration, for he can conceive of no moment in the Life of Christ when the "Word made Flesh" is not transfigured. There is no Agony, for the only picture of this spiritual struggle that human pencil could sketch must needs suggest a weakness and hesitancy in our Lord incompatible with the complete voluntariness of our Lord's sufferings, and the dignity and glory that is ever His.

(b) Needless to say, in S. John's Gospel there is

not the slightest trace of such purely human feelings as S. Mark attributes to our Lord^c. He is still full of love and tenderness. On the Cross His heart goes out in loving care to His Mother, and He weeps at Lazarus' graveside. But there is now no allusion to our Lord's anger, no expression of surprise, no inability to work cures as in the Synoptists.

(c) All the characters on John's stage are subordinated to the majestic Christ. Throughout the Gospel, Jesus, very God of very God, is the One and only Figure that really matters. He towers high above all the rest, and beside Him there is no other. Round the sublime Figure, everything, everybody else revolves. All the other actors in the drama appear, we know not whence, and vanish, we know not whither, as soon as they have borne their witness unto Him and served the purpose the author has in view in introducing them. Our Lord's disciples ever realize He is their King, and treat Him with the reverence and awe due to a King. He does not need the confession of a Peter, any more than He needed the testimony of any man: "for He knew

^c Here again, to avoid misconception, we shall anticipate what we say more fully later. S. John pre-eminently emphasizes our Lord's humanity. Jesus is "wearied with His journey" (iv. 6); troubled in soul (xii. 27); vehemently disturbed in spirit (xiii. 21); He groans, is troubled and weeps (xi. 33—35). He thirsts (xix. 28). He avoids Judæa, for fear of the Jews who seek to kill Him (vii. 1). He says He will not go yet to the Feast, but eventually goes, "not openly, but as it were in secret" (vii. 10). Thus S. John makes Christ intensely human in body, soul and spirit. "The Word *was* made *Flesh*" in S. John's Christ.

what was in man." All who come near the Christ, priest, disciples, rulers, crowds, at once recognize His superhuman greatness. The very soldiers and their officers, as soon as our Lord tells them, "I am He," "go backward, and fall to the ground."

(d) We have none of the limited scenery of the Synoptic stage. All minor distinctions of Pharisees and Sadducees, scribes and elders, Herodians, Galilee, Samaria, Judæa, vanish. There is no room on the canvas for such details, neither can John see them. Think of the immensity of John's subject. "In the beginning was the Word . . . all things were made by Him. . . . The Word was made Flesh, and came unto His own, and His own received Him not." The Evangelist has to take into his perspective the whole panorama from Eternity to the year 30 A.D. and beyond it, for the Life covers all this ground. Christ is in it all. Naturally, so as to take in his whole subject, John's standpoint is so distant that all details are blotted out. He can only focus the grand outline.

(e) Jesus is ever the same in S. John's picture. From beginning to end of the Gospel, John's theme has the stamp of finality impressed upon it; so his narrative admits of movement but of no development. Christ is known to Himself and acknowledged by others (i. 1—14, 26, 29, 33) as very God of very God quite as fully in the first chapter of this Gospel as in Thomas' confession in its very last verses: "My Lord and my God" (xx. 28). Between

these two scenes of the entrance and exit of the Incarnate Word on our earthly stage, there is no development in thought or plan in the chief actor in the drama. While others around Him are groping in darkness, Christ all along walks in full Light. He realizes every detail of His universal plan from the beginning, calmly, from a lofty height, regarding His earthly Life as one short, if very important, act in His eternal existence.

(f) Naturally, viewing the Life from a standpoint all his own, the whole form and spirit of S. John's narrative is altogether different from anything to which we have been accustomed in the other Gospels. Even when John gives us his facts of our Lord's Ministry, the course of events does not follow the Synoptic main lines. The incidents are unfamiliar, the persons different.

In the Synoptists, Galilee is the scene of our Lord's Ministry from start to finish. True, it closes with a brief visit to Jerusalem at the very end of our Lord's Life, the first and the last He made to the Holy City. In S. John, we are always in Judæa and Jerusalem. The Holy City is the proper scene of action, while Galilee is only an occasional place of retreat.

The points of contrast with the Synoptists might be indefinitely multiplied. The actors on John's stage, Nathanael, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman and many others,—who are these new people? Where are the pithy sayings, the parables, the practical

moral utterances with which we are so familiar in the other Gospels? Whence come John's "Discourses of our Lord," theological meditations strangely new in style and matter, though occasionally echoing sayings recorded in the Synoptists? The whole vocabulary of the fourth Gospel is characteristic. We are confronted with a complete series of new words full of symbolic meaning, such as *Word, Life, Light, Truth, World*.

When we come to the last great Week, the whole crisis hinges on a marvellous raising of Lazarus from the dead of which the Synoptists know nothing. On the other hand, familiar incidents reappear in such an entirely new form that we scarcely recognize them, e.g. the Last Supper is without its Eucharist.

Is it any wonder that scholars ask: Can an Evangelist so lacking in the historic sense really be S. John the Apostle, an eye-witness? They admit that the John who appeared to the learned Sanhedrists to be an "unlearned and ignorant man" (Acts iv. 13) may have become in his old age the deeply contemplative divine we see him in this intensely spiritual Gospel. It may be, too, that the spirit of the Son of Thunder, who wished to flash down fire from Heaven upon the insolent Samaritans, may have mellowed later into the sovereign calm of the Apostle of love. These points they are ready to grant. Their contention is that there is so much in the fourth Gospel which is strange, unhistorical

utterly at variance with anything we should expect in an Apostolic eye-witness, that the internal evidence seems altogether against its Johannine authorship. It rather suggests that we should seek the author of S. John in some sympathetic Jewish Christian of a later date, "who has grown up among Greek surroundings, and has been trained in the philosophy of Alexandria,—a man of thought, and a mystic, a symbolist and a painter, a character of calm and simple morality yet burning through and through with the sacred fire of religious emotion."

This is the problem before us. Did S. John, the Apostle, write the fourth Gospel, or who is its author? The question is one of more than academic or antiquarian interest. S. John xxi. 24 expressly states that this Gospel comes direct from the hand of "the disciple whom Jesus loved," i.e. an eye-witness of our Lord's Ministry, an intimate and specially beloved disciple of the Christ. It is this assurance, in the main, that makes many readers implicitly trust its portraiture of the Incarnate Son of God. To many people, it would seriously detract from the value of S. John's Gospel if it could be proved, as so many modern critics allege, that it is the work of some exceptionally devout but philosophic mystic of the second century, who wrote long after the facts, and not as an eye-witness. In their eyes, it would still be, as it ever must be, a unique, sublime, magnificent and masterly performance, but not authentic history.

Fortunately, this is a difficulty which does not

greatly trouble the majority of educated Christians nowadays. The question of the authorship of S. John naturally interests them, but the intrinsic value of the book itself is independent of and far outweighs the problem of its authorship, which is, perhaps, insoluble at the present day.

There is one easy way of cutting this Gordian knot. It is open to anyone to make the simple assertion that for all Christians, and, indeed, for any but wilful sceptics, the author's own statement in S. John xxi. 20, 24 conclusively clinches the whole question. "Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved. . . . This is the disciple which testifieth of these things." What further proof can we want than the Apostle's own signature?

Unfortunately, this argument proves a broken reed, and for the following reasons, among others: (*a*) Many books in the Bible profess to be written by authors who never wrote them, e.g. the Mosaic books, many of the Psalms, Proverbs. Pseudonymity was a recognized and, therefore, perfectly legitimate device among the ancient Jews. (*b*) S. John xxi. does not form part of the original Gospel. Even Westcott says of this last chapter: "differences of language, no less than the abruptness of its introduction and substance, seem to mark it clearly as an addition to the original narrative^d."

^d It is only fair to add that Westcott believes this last chapter to be S. John's own, only written at a much later date. This view, however, is open to serious question.

It is clearly an appendix of a later date, and probably by another hand.

There is, then, only one course open to us, if we would solve our problem. As in the other Gospels, we must examine the external, and, above all, the internal evidence, and see if these will supply us with any clues.



CHAPTER XXI.

S. JOHN—INCONCLUSIVENESS OF THE
EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.

Argument.

EXTERNAL evidence clearly proves the early existence and recognition of the Fourth Gospel, but is utterly inconclusive as to its Apostolic authorship. From 180 A.D. onwards, John, "the beloved disciple of the Lord," is named as the author, though even thus early the *Alogi* disputed the Apostolic authorship. Before 180 A.D., we have no evidence on this point. Reasons for suspecting the commonly accepted tradition. Most modern critics suspend their judgment or are openly adverse. Papias' famous piece of evidence, together with Eusebius' comment on it, complicate the problem still further. "John the Presbyter." Note on "The disciple whom Jesus loved."

CHAPTER XXI.

S. JOHN—INCONCLUSIVENESS OF THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.

IMMENSE pains has been taken to collect the external evidence in any way bearing on S. John's Gospel, and it is admitted on all hands that the chain of evidence is remarkably complete and strong *so far as it goes*. It establishes the existence and recognition of the fourth Gospel at a very early date (80—110 A.D.) almost beyond the possibility of a doubt. This is proved on the authority of a large mass of evidence of an unusually substantial character, gathered from a large number of second-century ecclesiastical and other writers.

But it is one thing to prove the early existence of S. John's Gospel, and quite another to establish its Apostolic authorship. On this latter point the external evidence is very thin and slight. Indeed, there is none forthcoming till 180 A.D.

Apostolic Fathers. The quotations from S. John in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Fathers seem to be more than mere parallelisms. In Ignatius the resemblance in words and ideas is often very striking, while in Polycarp there are at least two passages which indicate familiarity with Johanne literature, though they may possibly be re-

ferred to a common "oral tradition" source. For instance, "Everyone who shall not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is Antichrist."

Even Harnack admits the strong resemblance in many passages of the *Didache* with parallel sections in S. John.

Justin Martyr (140—160 A.D.) had read S. John's Gospel and quotes it. This is nowadays admitted by Harnack and almost all critics. There is, for instance, the well-known passage in Justin (in 151 A.D.): "For Christ also said, Except ye be born again, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter again into their mother's womb, is manifest to all" (cf. S. John iii. 3, 4). By itself, this single passage would be inconclusive. It might easily be a quotation which had reached both "S. John" and Justin independently from a common source. It is, however, supported by a very large number of other Johannine parallels in Justin—Justin says of the Apocalypse, "a man amongst us named John wrote it^a."

Tatian (173 A.D.) composed a "Harmony of the Four Gospels." He uses the fourth Gospel as much as any other, even beginning his book with S. John's "Prologue." Indeed, he quotes the fourth Gospel almost in its entirety.

Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch in 180 A.D., quotes

* The words, "the Apostle," ("one of the Apostles of the Christ,") after John are supposed by many to be a later addition.

John by name, and gives S. John the epithet "spirit-bearing," alluding to the Inspiration of his Gospel.

Irenæus (180 A.D.) also quotes John by name; so does Clement of Alexandria shortly after him. Clement states that "John, moved by the Holy Spirit, wrote a spiritual Gospel on observing that the things obvious to the senses (τὰ σωματικά, the external facts) had been set forth in the earlier Gospels."

The *Muratorian Fragment* (175—200 A.D.), containing the first formal list extant of New Testament books, includes S. John's Gospel by name. The author of this Fragment tells us this Gospel was written by S. John at the request of contemporary Christians, and with the concurrence of the other Apostles. The last clause of this statement, however, has thrown considerable doubt on this piece of evidence.

The *Allogi*, a (heretical?) Christian sect (about 180 A.D.), living in Asia Minor, bear full testimony to the existence of the fourth Gospel, and also to the fact that in their day it was commonly ascribed to S. John. They themselves, however, on the ground of S. John's inconsistency with the Synoptists, denied its Johannine authorship, as well as that of the Apocalypse, and attributed these books to Cerinthus, a Jewish-Christian Gnostic.

After 180 A.D., tradition is unanimous in assigning the fourth Gospel to "John, the beloved disciple." It is a remarkable fact, in connexion with the external

evidence, that none of the second-century ecclesiastical writers ever calls John "the Apostle," but invariably "the disciple b."

Thus the early existence and recognition of the fourth Gospel is almost indisputably established, but the external evidence for its Apostolic authorship is not strong. We have none at all till 180 A.D., and the evidence of late ecclesiastical writers of the second century carries little weight in the matter of authorship. They were very uncritical, and over-eager to seize upon any casual piece of evidence supporting a Gospel's Apostolic claims. Thus we have already seen that the same authorities who ascribe our Gospel to S. John assure us that our S. Matthew was written by the Apostle Matthew, a testimony which is admitted on all hands to be wrong and of no value.

Now, even if there had been no other grounds for adopting such a course, the palpable incongruity between S. John and the Synoptists must sooner or later have raised the whole question of the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel. It was on this very plea that the Alogi, in 180 A.D., refused to ascribe it to S. John the Apostle. The discrepancy is so glaring that many conservative scholars, in the interest of

^b It is possible to lay too much stress on this fact, which is only in keeping with the title claimed in the Gospel itself by its writer. The word "Apostle" only occurs once in the fourth Gospel, and then *not* in its ordinary sense. The term *μαθητῆς τοῦ κυρίου* is applied by Papias to all the Apostles, and over and over again by Irenæus to John himself; yet Irenæus believed the John who wrote the Fourth Gospel to be the Apostle himself.

historical truth, feel the greatest hesitancy in accepting the author of S. John as an Apostolic eye-witness.

What still further complicates the problem and renders it even more difficult to assign the Gospel to S. John is a well-known passage of Papias. He tells us that he carefully inquired into what "the elders, what Andrew or what Peter *said* (εἶπεν), or what Thomas or James, or what *John* or Matthew, or any one of the disciples of the Lord; and what Aristion and *John the Elder* (ὁ πρεσβύτερος Ἰωάννης), the *disciples of the Lord, say* (λέγουσι)."

Here we have a second John, John the Elder (or Presbyter), a disciple of the Lord, coming upon the scene. Moreover, the change of tense ("what the elders (including *John*) *said*; and what Aristion and *John the Elder say*") clearly proves that, at the time of Papias' writing, the former elders were dead, while John the Elder and Aristion, two of the immediate disciples of the Lord, were still living^d.

^c Why are the Apostles named by Papias in this unnatural order? Is it a mere coincidence that S. John i. 40—43 also gives the same order (1) Andrew (2) Peter (3) Philip? Next, in Papias, comes Thomas, who plays a prominent part in S. John (xi. 16; xiv. 5; xx. 24—28; cf. xxi. 2). James and John, two of the select three, come very late in the list. So they do in John xxi. 2, and in the Fourth Gospel, they are very subordinated, never mentioned by name, only as "sons of Zebedee."

^d It has been ingeniously suggested that, after writing the first clause, Papias—a loose writer, "a man of very small intelligence, as one may clearly see from his own writings" (Eusebius)—suddenly recollects that two of the immediate disciples of the Lord, John the Elder already mentioned and Aristion not an Elder, are not dead but still alive. He therefore corrects himself and adds: "or (rather),

There is more than this. This statement of Papias is quoted by Eusebius, who disliked the millenarian views of the Apocalypse. Possibly on this account he disbelieved in the Johannine authorship of the Revelation, and assigned it to this "John the Elder," the disciple of the Lord, whom Papias quotes. Eusebius drops no hint of his own belief that the Gospel was written by John the Elder as well. But the natural inference is to that effect, for the Gospel and Apocalypse have always, from earliest days, been commonly accepted as the work of one and the same author.

Here, as elsewhere, Papias' evidence has been seized upon as a valuable clue. For reasons already alleged, the Apostolic authorship of S. John seemed to many scholars an incredible hypothesis. Why should Eusebius not be right, they ask, in assigning the Johannine writings to this John the Elder, the disciple of the Lord, who lived at Ephesus, and whom Papias had met and heard? John the Presbyter, they maintain, covers all the facts of the fourth Gospel far better than John the Apostle. He is a man held in high esteem as the immediate disciple of the Lord, who has grown up at Ephesus amid Greek surroundings and culture, and of a later date than the Apostle. True, ancient tradition has always associated the name of the Apostle S. John with the fourth Gospel, but "historical criticism teaches us

what Aristion and John the Elder say." Thus the two Johns would be one and the same.

ever more clearly that many traditional positions are untenable, and must give place to new and startling discoveries^e. Tradition, they say, is wrong in the case of our S. Matthew's Gospel, why not here? None of the other Gospels is the work of an Apostle, though tradition has tried hard to make us believe that S. Mark is S. Peter's, and S. Luke S. Paul's Gospel. In the matter of S. John's Gospel tradition has been more successful, but is it based on sound foundations? One can readily understand how tradition would soon convert "John, the disciple of the Lord," into John the Apostle of the Lord.

On these grounds, Harnack, and a great many modern scholars, have adopted Eusebius' conclusion^f. They are convinced that tradition has confused the Apostle John with John the Presbyter, a dweller at Ephesus, whose existence is affirmed by Papias. To this John the Elder, the disciple of the Lord, they therefore assign the fourth Gospel.

The advocates of the Johannine authorship natu-

^e Harnack, "Luke the Physician," Preface vi.

^f Eusebius, after stating that Papias mentions the name John twice, (1) with Peter and the rest of the Apostles, (2) with others who were not Apostles, calling him an Elder, and placing Aristion before him, adds: "so that even in this way he indicates the truth of the statements of those who have said that there were two who had the same name in Asia, and that there were two tombs in Ephesus, and that each is still called a 'tomb of John.' We ought to attend to these facts, for it is probable that it was the *second* John who saw the Apocalypse which passes under the name of John, *unless anyone wishes to believe that it was the first*" (H.E. III. 39).

rally endeavour to disparage and discredit Papias' evidence on this point. Eusebius speaks of Papias in strangely contradictory terms. Usually he is, in Eusebius' eyes, "a man in all respects of the greatest erudition and well acquainted with the Scriptures^g." But when Eusebius disagrees with him, Papias becomes "a man of exceedingly small intelligence, as one may infer from his own writings^h."

Conservative critics have seized on the last statement, and promptly called into question Papias' accuracy in the matter of the two Johns. They maintain that Papias was evidently a loose and careless writer who has spoken of "John the Presbyter" and "John the Apostle" as if they were two distinct persons, whereas they are really one and the same.

It should, however, not be overlooked that these same conservative scholars are more than ready to accept Papias as a most reliable authority when he assures us that "Mark was the interpreter of Peter," or, "the Apostle Matthew made a collection of the *logia* of the Lord in the Hebrew tongue." We cannot well follow Eusebius' example and blow hot and cold with the same breath. The existence of two Johns, John the Apostle and John the Elder, both "disciples of the Lord," may now be generally regarded as an established fact. Few critics are to be found ready to dispute it at the present day.

^g ἄνθρωπος τὰ πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα λογιώτατος. Eus. H.E. III. 36.

^h σφόδρα σικιρὸς ὢν τὸν νοῦν ὡς ἂν ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων τεκευηράμενον εἰπεῖν. III. 39.

To sum up. The external evidence for the early existence of S. John's Gospel is exceptionally complete, even within the compass of the second century. This testimony is also drawn from an unusually large number of most trustworthy authorities from all quarters. More than this; there is more than sufficient evidence to establish the fact that, at a very early date, the conviction of the sacred character of this Gospel-story was widespread.

On the other hand, it is quite another matter when we impartially examine the external evidence in support of the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel. Here candour compels us to admit that the evidence is very slight; indeed, there is none in the proper sense of the word.

All the traditional pieces of evidence converge to one and the same point: viz. all writers up to the end of the second century declare the author of the fourth Gospel to have been "John, the disciple of the Lord¹." No one calls him "Apostle" or says that

¹ Critics adverse to the Johannine authorship admit that second century writers declare the author to be "the beloved disciple *who leaned on Jesus' breast at supper.*" But they explain this fact away on two grounds. (a) It is palpably copied from the spurious appendix (S. John xxi. 20). (b) The conclusion that "the disciple whom Jesus loved" must be one of the Twelve rests entirely upon the assumption that the Twelve Apostles alone participated with our Lord in the last Supper, — a highly improbable idea, "entirely based on Mark xiv. 17."

It may be well here to collate some of the internal evidence on this point, though we refer to it again later. *Who was the disciple whom Jesus loved?* He was in the place of honour at the last Supper (xiii. 23). At the Cross, it is to him our Lord confides His mother (xix. 26). He is S. Peter's companion to the Tomb (xx. 2, 3). In

he was one of the Twelve, till the third century. From the third century onwards, practically all writers know the author as John the Apostle, and ignore John the Elder.

We shall now turn to the internal evidence and see if it has any light to throw on the points at issue.

Chap. xxi. he is twice a prominent actor (7, 20 sqq.). A tradition has had time to grow in the Church that "this disciple should not die" (xxi. 23). If the "other disciple" of xix. 16 is the same, he is "known unto the high-priest."

Now the only *natural* inference is that "the beloved disciple" is (1) one of the Twelve; (2) one of the specially intimate three. He cannot be Peter, for Peter is constantly mentioned *along with him*; nor James, for he died about 44 A.D., too early for the tradition of his never dying to have arisen. Thus only John remains.

We must also note that *John, though one of the three intimate disciples, is not once named in this Gospel*, and only in xxi. 2 are the "sons of Zebedee" even referred to. This speaks volumes. If reference to John xxi. is allowed, a similar result follows. This disciple must be one of the seven named in xxi. 2. Three are excluded for they are mentioned by name. The choice thus lies between the two "sons of Zebedee," and "two other disciples," not named probably because they are not of the Twelve. Can we hesitate in our choice?

[Weisse and Sabatier think that John can hardly have written of himself: "the disciple whom Jesus loved." It lacks humility and savours of vainglory. Hase more justly remarks: "Weisse did not understand the joyous pride of being in all humility the object of the most unmerited love." [cf. S. Paul speaking of himself (2 Cor. xii. 2—5.)]

CHAPTER XXII.

S. JOHN—A GOSPEL TRANSFIGURED BY
ITS LEADING IDEA:

“THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH.”

Argument.

S. JOHN'S leading idea, "The Word was made Flesh," the key to the Fourth Gospel. The author is a philosopher-theologian, not a historian. He takes little interest in pure history or biography; his aim is something different and higher. "Truth of idea" (cf. Carlyle's "the poet is the only seer") an important factor in the writing of Jewish history. To S. John (*a*) Truth of idea is more real than truth of fact; (*b*) his main aim is to edify (xx. 31); (*c*) his Gospel is an epic poem; (*d*) he writes to combat Gnostic and other speculative heresies and uses their own weapons.

CHAPTER XXII.

S. JOHN—A GOSPEL TRANSFIGURED BY ITS
LEADING IDEA: "THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH."

IN dealing with the Synoptists, we have noted that each Evangelist moulds and arranges the material at his disposal according to certain leading and fundamental ideas, peculiar to himself.

The Gospel of S. John is pervaded by one leading thought, and the opening sentence in this Gospel, as in the other three, strikes its key-note: "*In the beginning was the Word.*" The fundamental conception and object of S. John is ever one and the same: *The Divine Glory of Christ, the Incarnate Word.*

S. John's Prologue thus gives us the standpoint from which S. John surveys the Life of Christ. He explains everything that Christ *says* and *does* in terms of what He *is*. He works from within outwards. He asks himself the question: Given the facts of Christ's Life, how shall we bind them into unity and read them as an organic whole? He promptly answers: "*The Word was made Flesh.*" Here, for John, is the key which fits into all the wards of the lock, the one principle which harmonizes all the facts of the Life.

In other words, S. John approaches the Life of Christ as a philosopher and theologian, not as a chronicler. He takes little or no interest in the events of the Life from a purely historical point of view. From the outset, his aim is something different and higher. He has a supreme object in view which far transcends mere historical accuracy of details. The facts of the Life of Christ are already perfectly familiar, household words, to his readers^a. He is not writing a biography. A great life cannot be rendered by a simple agglomeration of facts, however complete. S. John's wish is to probe to the very soul of the history of Christ, to give the clue which will guide men into the full and unspeakable significance of the words and deeds in the Life of Jesus which they already know so well. As a means to his end, S. John is even ready to make a conscious and deliberate sacrifice of historical accuracy for higher ends.

In this connexion, Dr. Inge aptly quotes a passage from Origen's writings : " In one place of his Com-

^a Did "S. John" presuppose a knowledge of our Synoptic Gospels? It has often been noted that the Fourth Gospel is both scrappy, yet, at times, detailed, e.g. (1) The author introduces facts and characters in his pages as if they were already well-known, whereas he himself has told us nothing about them. (2) He is strangely complete and detailed where the Synoptists are silent.—Many scholars still explain this strange phenomenon on the principle that S. John assumes a knowledge of the Synoptists and simply fills up their blanks, so that the two dovetail. Unfortunately, this plausible theory does not cover the facts. S. John more often contradicts than supplements the Synoptists. Of course, he was familiar with the *oral tradition* which underlies our Synoptists, but the internal evidence proves nothing more.

mentary on S. John, Origen says that when the writers of Holy Scripture were unable to speak the truth 'at once spiritually and bodily' (i.e. at once literally and with a deeper spiritual meaning), it was their practice to prefer the spiritual to the corporeal: *'the true spiritual meaning being often preserved in the corporeal falsehood.'*"

In this respect, John is the most Jewish of Jews, so convinced is he that truth of idea is infinitely more true than truth of fact.

In the eyes of a generation like ours, which insists on the strictest conformity of statement to actual fact, this apathy in historical accuracy of detail may seem a serious indictment, derogatory to S. John, altogether detracting from his value and credibility as an Evangelist. Still it may occur to thinking minds that there is another side to the picture, and that a S. John and the Jews of old, to whom we often do less than justice, have much to say in their defence.

Truth is one, but it has many modes of expression. There is a truth of poetry as well as of prose. Indeed, poetry is often the only medium of expression for the highest, noblest, largest truths which are too deep, subtle and far-reaching to be revealed otherwise. At certain altitudes, feeling is the surest guide. The matter-of-fact prosaist defines poetry as the dreams of a visionary, closely akin to the untruths of pure fiction. We prefer Carlyle's: "the poet is the only true seer, the only true historian, interpreting events, interpreting the universally visible,

entirely indubitable Revelation of the Author of this Universe. How can Dryasdust interpret such things, the dark chaotic dullard, who knows the meaning of nothing cosmic or noble, nor ever will know? Poor wretch, one sees what kind of meaning *he* educes from man's history, this long while past, and has got all the world to believe of it, along with him." "Unhappy Dryasdust, thrice unhappy world that takes Dryasdust's reading of the ways of God^b." Yes, Carlyle is right. An Isaiah and a Plato prove that all prophets are seers, all seers are poets, and history itself at its best is the daughter of poetry. Say what we will, in spite of, or rather because of this sacrifice of truth of fact to truth of idea, there is, to quote Carlyle again: "a terrible Hebrew *veracity* in every line of the Hebrew Bible."

Therefore it is *not* derogatory to S. John to say that he is a poet. As Dr. Westcott well puts it: "This Gospel is in the highest sense a poem, because it is the simple utterance of a mind which received into itself most deeply, and reproduced most simply, absolute truth. The other Gospels are memoirs because they present the Life of Christ under *limited* relations: S. John is a poem because it presents the Life uniformly in its relation to the *Infinite*, and poetry is the power of giving Infinity to things."

In another sense we moderns are apt to misunder-

^b "Frederick the Great," I. 14.

stand and misjudge Jewish writers. They were more concerned with making saints than recording bare historical facts. This comes out in strong relief all through Old Testament history. Few people now believe that the biographies of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob give us the actual facts about these patriarchs. Tradition supplied the Hebrew biographers with a slight outline for their sketches of these Hebrew heroes. They filled in this outline with details of their own creation so as to present Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as spiritually perfect types, models for after ages to copy.

In other words, truth, in Hebrew eyes, was not only truth of idea, but as a corollary flowing from this, truth was that which edified the heart and ennobled the character. It was a matter of motive and character rather than of literal accuracy. This conception of it was a peculiarly Jewish feature even in our Lord's day. Romans did not understand it, any more than we do. When, in answer to our Lord's words: "for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth. Every one that is of the Truth heareth My voice," Pilate replied, "What is Truth?" he was looking at Truth, as we do nowadays, in a hard matter-of-fact logical way, and moving in a totally different realm of thought from that of the Jews.

S. John's Gospel is a poem. His aim is to edify: "these (things) are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (xx. 31).

Truth of idea is more real to him than truth of fact. Only if we bear these three axioms in mind shall we understand S. John's Gospel, for a twentieth-century scientific generation has far less in common with this Hebrew seer than with the matter-of-fact Synoptists.

The Synoptists are professedly historical. It suits their purpose. It suited a S. Mark, a S. Luke, and a S. Matthew to base the superstructure of their narrative on the actual events of our Lord's Ministry, and they were perfectly justified in following that course. S. John strikes out a new line of his own, and consciously forsakes the historical method. He prefers to follow the plan he has mapped out for himself as best calculated to serve *his* purpose. Every Evangelist has a perfect right to deal with his subject in his own way, and it is not a valid objection to urge that another has thought fit to treat it differently. We must judge the artist by the finished picture. On that alone does he stand or fall.

We often do less than justice to S. John in another way. We isolate his Gospel from the time and place that gave it birth. Every word in it derives something of its significance from the moment and locality at which it was spoken. Whether the author be John the Apostle, or John the Elder, all scholars admit that, at the time of writing, he was living amid Greek surroundings and culture, probably at Ephesus, the meeting-place of

East and West. The trend of modern critical opinion also consistently points to the end of the first century as the date of the composition of S. John's Gospel.

Here we have the clue to almost everything in S. John's writings. Christianity was still in its infancy, and face to face with the gravest dangers within the Christian Church itself.

In John's day, Christianity had come into close touch with Greek philosophy and eastern speculation. The questions agitating the minds of Christian thinkers were now of quite a different type from the difficulties of S. Paul's^c or even the Synoptic generation. Men were no longer interested in the controversies as to circumcision, the obligation of the Mosaic Law, or any of the old disputes which had raged thirty years before. Far different were the controversial topics which were now keenly and hotly discussed. They were questions of a more abstract character, more in harmony with the Greek speculative temper, questions relating above all to the nature of Christ. These speculations proved the hotbed of numberless heresies.

There were, for example, the Gnostics. Gnosticism is the child of Christian thought wedded to Greek philosophy. It drew largely from the

^c True, S. Paul had foreseen the advent of speculative heresies. In Acts xx. 29, 30, he forewarns the elders of the Church of Miletus and Ephesus that after his "departure" the very heresies with which S. John has to contend will arise.

philosophic systems of Plato and the Stoics, but it also borrowed from Persian and Oriental religions. Gnosticism regarded matter as gross and impure, God as an unknowable Spirit, the body as the prison of the soul and the source of all evil. The Gnostic creed is that God and material beings are poles apart. The only possibility of communication between them is by a series of intermediate "principalities and powers," kinds of angels, with the "Word of God" at the head of the hierarchy and second only to God Himself^d. With their idea that matter is impure and the body the source of all evil, the bare suggestion of the Incarnation was sacrilege. Therefore they rejected the teaching that Jesus was born the Son of God. They maintained that it was only at His Baptism that the Godhead descended on Him in the form of a dove, while on the Cross the Divine Christ flew back into Heaven, being incapable of suffering. The Gnostics ("they who know") were so called, because they were puffed up with an inflated sense of their own superior knowledge which elevated them far above their simpler brethren. Knowledge in their system took the place of "charity" in S. Paul's.

Then there were the *Docetists*^e. They maintained

^d cf. Justin Martyr, *Apol.* i. 32, "The first power, after God, the Father and Master of all, is the Son, the Word, Who, having been made flesh in a certain way, became Man" (ὅς τίνα τρόπον σαρκοποιήθεις ἄνθρωπος γέγονεν).

^e Early Gnosticism and Docetism have many points of contact.

that the human form of Christ was a mere phantom, and not a real body. They denied, in fact, the humanity of Christ altogether.

The *Ebionites*, on the other hand, denied Christ's Divinity and said that He was a mere man.

Nay more, men speculated about God Himself. He could not possibly be the source of evil. This was the work of a rival power, the Demiurge, the creator of matter. Thus we get a return to the Persian Ormuzd and Ahriman, the God of Light and the God of Darkness, with the final triumph of Ormuzd.

Such were the errors S. John had to combat, and it was to counteract these heresies that he wrote his Gospel. He fights heretics with their own weapons. He uses the very language of Philo^f the Gnostic, and by means of his own terms "*Word*," "*Life*," "*Light*," "*Fulness*," "*only-begotten Son*," overthrews Gnostic errors by his magnificent presentation of the counter-truth. These heretics had denied that the Man Jesus was born the Son of God, and S. John says in every possible form of words, "Jesus is Christ, Christ is Jesus, Jesus is God, God was made Man, the Word became Flesh. He who denies that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is Antichrist."

Is it any wonder, then, that S. John throughout

^f Philo was a Jew, not a Christian, but his system lies at the basis of all Gnosticism.

the Gospel refuses to look upon the Man Jesus in any other light than as the Incarnate Word, very God of very God, or that he consistently enhances His Divine Majesty? Have we not also here the key to the striking contrast, the discrepancy between S. John and the Synoptists which is often so glaring?

In our next chapter, in dealing with the internal evidence, we shall see how this leading idea, "The Word was made Flesh," pervades every verse of the fourth Gospel.

CHAPTER XXIII.

S. JOHN—THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE
EXAMINED.

Argument.

S. JOHN'S Gospel is pervaded by one fundamental conception: "The Word was made Flesh." Christ is perfect Man, but perfect God. The Incarnate Word is God from all eternity, hence (*a*) the deep impression made by Jesus on all who come near Him: (*b*) Contrasts with the Synoptists, e.g. S. John's bare allusions to the Birth, Baptism, Temptation, Transfiguration and Agony; (*c*) the new light in which S. John regards Miracles; (*d*) S. John's treatment of the "Discourses." Various theories suggested in explanation of the contrast between S. John's "Discourses of our Lord" and the Synoptic version of them. S. John idealizes and spiritualizes the familiar facts of oral tradition. He assumes a knowledge of our Lord's Life and Sayings, and brings out their spiritual inner meaning. Intrinsic value of S. John. The Synoptists are wanted to supplement spiritual S. John, S. John is needed to interpret the matter-of-fact Synoptists.

CHAPTER XXIII.

S. JOHN—THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE EXAMINED.

WE have said that the leading idea of S. John's Gospel is : "The Word was made Flesh." It has also been pointed out that in John's day, at the end of the first century, in a Greek land, men all around him were denying the eternal Godhead of Jesus. Gnostics made the Divinity "come and go to Jesus like a bird through the air," descending upon Him in the form of a dove at His Baptism, flying back to heaven at His Crucifixion. The Docetists actually made Christ cry from the Cross : "My Godhead, My Godhead^a, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (p. 130 sup.). Ebionites denied the Divinity of Jesus altogether.

Against such errors John writes his inspired Gospel. He sees that all these heresies begin and end with a denial of the eternal Divinity of Christ. Therefore, in every possible form of words, he asserts that in the historical Man Jesus dwells the fulness of God. Jesus is the Word. The Word is God from all eternity. This Word was clothed in real flesh and blood and, in the person of Jesus, dwelt among men. The Godhead was in Christ continuously and inseparably

^a lit. "My Power, My Power" (ἡ δύναμις μου).

before His Birth, at His Birth, throughout His Life, on the Cross, at His Resurrection and Ascension. It is His from all Eternity to all Eternity. Jesus is not a separate being from God. He and God the Father are one. He who denies that the Man Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is Antichrist. The Divine Glory of God is revealed in the Personality, in the sayings, in the deeds of the Man Jesus, the Incarnate Word.

This is S. John's whole theme. It remains to apply it practically, to show by illustrations from his Gospel how this fundamental conception moulds the entire arrangement of his material, leaves an unmistakable impress upon it, pervades every portion of his book. We shall take, by way of examples, S. John's (a) account of the impression made by Jesus on all who come near Him, (b) his contrasts with the Synoptists, (c) his miracles, (d) his discourses.

(a) *Impression made by Jesus on all who come near Him.* It matters not who come into contact with Jesus, one and all, in S. John's Gospel, instantaneously recognize His superhuman Personality and are awed by it. Not men of one class only, but in every grade of life, from the outcast to the Sanhedrist, from the peasant to the Roman governor.

The *Baptist* exclaims : " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world " (i. 29).

Nathanael :

" Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God " (i. 49).

The *Samaritan woman* : “ Is not this the Christ ? ”
(iv. 29).

The *Samaritans* : “ We have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world ”
(iv. 42).

Peter : “ We believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God ” (vi. 69).

The *people* : “ When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these ? ” (vii. 31).

The *blind man* : “ Lord, I believe ” (i.e. that Thou art the “ Son of God ”) (ix. 35—38).

Martha : “ I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, Which should come into the world ” (xi. 27).

The *soldiers* : “ As soon as He said, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground ”
(xviii. 6).

Pilate : “ I find no fault in Him ”
(xix. 6) ; “ Whence art Thou ? ” (xix. 9).

Thomas : “ My Lord and my God ”
(xx. 28).

On the other hand, if S. John is careful to prove that Jesus is Christ, he is equally at pains to show that Christ is Jesus. "The Word was *made Flesh*" (cf. 1 John iv. 2, 3; 2 John 7, "for many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh"). S. John looks upon the Docetists, equally with Ebionites, as deceivers and Antichrists. The real humanity of Jesus Christ is emphasized in the fourth Gospel: e.g., at the Samaritan well, Jesus was tired and thirsty (John iv. 6 sqq.). He wept by Lazarus' graveside (xi. 35). On the Cross He cried out, "I thirst" (xix. 28)^b.

(*b*) *Contrasts with the Synoptists.* We have already seen (p. 400 sqq.) that John omits such critical events as our Lord's Virgin Birth, Baptism, Temptation, Transfiguration, Agony, the Institution of the Eucharist.

These omissions are due to two main reasons: (*a*) S. John assumes and knows that these historical facts are perfectly well known to his readers. Like the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, S. John, for the moment, says to them: "Let us cease to speak of the first principles of Christian doctrine and press on unto perfection." He wishes, even as S. Paul, to feed his hearers "with meat, and not with milk." This is one reason; here is another: (*b*) S. John considered the ordinary material representations of many

^b See fuller details of our Lord's humanity, p. 401 n.

of these events, in their current form, as derogatory to the majesty and dignity of the eternal Christ, the Incarnate Word.

Yet a closer study of the fourth Gospel soon reveals the fact that S. John is not ignorant of these incidents in our Lord's Life, nor indifferent to them. For many of them are actually referred to incidentally in other parts of his Gospel.

Our Lord's human Birth. The human parentage of our Lord is passed over in silence. To some minds, S. John's Incarnation of the Word is difficult to grasp. They find S. Matthew's or S. Luke's accounts of the Birth easier to receive. Is it so? To thinking men, which is the more adequate expression of this greatest of all mysteries? Place the two side by side: S. Matthew's, "When as His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost"; S. John's: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made Flesh." Which is the easier of the two to receive? There have been saintly and profound Christian intellects who have confessed that the statement in S. Matthew almost repels them. No one can say that of S. John's infinitely higher and truer idea of the Incarnation.

Even in S. John, however, there are hints that he was well aware of our Lord's human parentage. He constantly alludes to the Mother of Jesus (e.g. S. John ii. 1, 3, 5, 12; vi. 42; xix. 25, 26, 27), though

he never mentions her by name. In vii. 42 he also tells us: "Hath not Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

Baptism by John the Baptist. Several good reasons have been alleged for this omission on the part of an Evangelist who had such an exalted conception of the Divine Majesty of Jesus: (1) The true Baptism is the Baptism of the Incarnation of the Word. (2) Docetists appealed to the oral-tradition statement of the Holy Spirit's descent upon our Lord at His Baptism, in the shape of a dove, in support of their theory that it was only then that the Godhead came to the Man Jesus. (3) There was an exaggerated reverence in many minds for the Baptist, as S. Luke tells us in the Acts (e.g. xix. 1—5). Now baptism was generally received at the hands of a Master by his disciples. Many might argue that Jesus was, after all, only a disciple of the Baptist whom He followed, and whose work He took up.

The Baptism is significantly hinted at in S. John i. 32, 33: "John bare record, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He Which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."

Temptation. In no other way has our Lord's

Teaching so suffered and been misinterpreted as by converting His word-pictures into bald prose, His figures of speech into literal facts (e.g. hell-fire). The Temptation is a case in point. It is one of the most instructive passages in the New Testament illustrating the symbolism of the Bible. As Dr. Sanday truly writes, the three scenes in which the Son of God is assailed by the Tempter are essentially parabolic. "The change of place by levitation to the Temple and the 'exceeding high mountain' recalls to us especially the words of Ezekiel (viii. 2, 3): 'And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north.'"^c

S. John instinctively felt—and history has proved he was right,—that the material presentation of our Lord's Temptation, current in his day, was wrong and likely to convey a false impression, derogatory to our Lord's dignity.

S. John seems to omit altogether any allusion to the Temptation. Attempts have been made to find parallels to it in events narrated between the Baptist's testimony to Christ and his imprisonment, the period within which the Temptation occurred. The essence of the first temptation lies in our Lord's possession of Divine power, and His refusal to use it for

^c "*Life of Christ in recent research*," p. 28.

selfish ends. It has been suggested that in S. John's account (ii.) of the miraculous conversion of water into wine for the good of others, we have the parallel to Christ's refusal to turn stones into bread for His own sake. Similarly in John's record of our Lord's descent upon the Temple as a reformer (iii. 13), we are supposed to find the parallel to our Lord's second temptation: "Cast Thyself down from the pinnacle of the Temple." Again, in John iv. 1 we read the strange words: "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, *He left Judea and departed again into Galilee.*" Why this sudden departure for such a reason? John vi. 15 suggests an answer. On the strength of the rumour that a greater than John the Baptist was among them, the people might take Him by force, and make Him king. Here, say some scholars, we have the parallel to the third temptation.

These suggestions, however, are more ingenious than convincing. True, it would be thoroughly in keeping with S. John's general method thus to spiritualize the three temptations and dissociate them from their original context.

Transfiguration. In S. John's eyes, the whole of our Lord's Life on earth is a Transfiguration. There is never a moment in it all when the "Word made Flesh" is not revealed in the fulness of His Divine glory. There is, therefore, no occasion for any reference to a solitary and momentary Transfiguration on one particular day only.

Agony. S. John's sublime conception of Christ forbids him to approach such a scene. The only picture of it man can draw must needs be poor, unintelligent, suggestive of weakness and hesitancy in our Lord. Therefore, S. John shrinks from it. The idea of a Christ exceedingly sorrowful, afraid of death, physically exhausted, is repellent to a S. John. It is utterly incompatible with his conception of the Divine Jesus Who knows beforehand, and has Himself mapped out, every step of the road He means to tread.

In John xii. 27—29 we read: "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: *but for this cause came I unto this hour.* Father, glorify Thy Name. Then came there a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

Here we have the same scene, with the same conflict of heart, the same prayer to be saved from this hour. The same, yet how very different. All trace of weakness or hesitancy is gone. The same facts are still there, but with an exquisite delicacy of touch, John has transfigured the picture. True, he has altered the context and deliberately sacrificed truth of fact to truth of idea, but few will say that his is not the truer portraiture. We grant that S. John's pictures are idealized^d, in the sense that they

^d We speak here of S. John's pictures as *idealized*, but let us again (cf. 399 n.) define the word. We look at the portrait of a well-known friend,—an ordinary face we usually think it,—yet we see it now lit up

are interpreted in the light of an idea, but, if this idea is true, the ideal is the only real.

Institution of the Eucharist. In S. John we have a Last Supper without its Eucharist. Can anything more convincingly prove how thoroughly S. John takes for granted in his readers a full knowledge of those very incidents which he himself passes over in silence? (see p. 424 n.) A Christian Church without a weekly or daily Eucharist is a moral impossibility. Now, why does a celebration of the Eucharist take place at all, if it be not because from the very beginning Christ was believed to have done a similar act the same night in which He was betrayed (cf. 1 Cor. xi. 23 sqq.)? We might as well assume that S. John does not know of the Lord's Prayer because he nowhere records it.

As a matter of fact, S. John omits the Institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper for the same reason that he says nothing of the Transfiguration

with a strange beauty. At once we recognize the likeness, and say, "It is he, only rather idealized." No! it is the man himself, only the artist with his keen insight has eyes to see what we see not. To us, the face is a mask: he has had a vision of the soul breaking through the outer covering. He has seized the expression at the moment of the man's inspiration by some soul-stirring thought, aglow with some deep emotion, lit up by the fire that comes from the individual's inmost self. This is the man's true self; the ordinary face we see is his mask. Hence Carlyle's words: "Often I have found a portrait superior in instruction to half-a-dozen biographies, or rather, I have found the portrait was a lighted candle, by which the biographies could for the first time be read, and some human interpretation be made of them."

usually assigned to a particular day. The whole of the fourth Gospel is sacramental. The wine-miracle is Eucharistic, so is the feeding of the five thousand. Is it any wonder that a S. John, who idealizes and spiritualizes everything, introduces the Institution of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord at the beginning, and not the end of the Ministry?

These are a few of the more striking contrasts between S. John and the Synoptists. But it would be easy to draw up a long list of other incidents in the fourth Gospel, illustrating S. John's freedom and independence in his treatment of the oral-tradition material which he and the Synoptists use in common.

To take only a few instances by way of example, compare:—S. Peter's confession in John vi. 68, with Matth. xvi. 16, Mark viii. 29, Luke ix. 20. The healing of the nobleman's son: John iv. 46 sqq. with Matth. viii. 5 sqq., Luke vii. 2 sqq. The story of the arrest: John xviii. 4 sqq. with Matth. xxvi. 47 sqq., Luke xxii. 47 sqq., Mark xiv. 43 sqq. In each case, the same characteristic features of differences in details will be palpably apparent. In every instance the incidents are the same in S. John as in the Synoptists, but the treatment is so different. More than this, the motive is always transparent, for every detail of difference in S. John heightens the dignity of our Lord as compared with the Synoptic account.

(c) *Miracles.* These, again, are viewed by S. John in the light of his glorified conception of the Incarnate

Word. Jesus is no mere Wonder-Worker. Our Lord's miracles are, to a S. John, only "signs." He sees in 90—100 A.D. what we have only just discovered in 1900 A.D., that we must reason from miracles up to Christ, not from Christ down to miracles. In the presence of a Personality like Christ,—the "Word made Flesh," "by Whom all things were made, and without Whom was not anything made that was made," the Creator of the Universe, the Life-giver Who knows the secret of Life,—how can we any longer wonder at the healing of the sick, the turning of water into wine, the raising of Lazarus from the grave? All these things at once cease to be strange. The supernatural becomes the natural. It is only our limitation of knowledge that makes us call it supernatural. The Word, "by Whom all things were made," works with a knowledge of a great Chapter of which we only know a few verses or letters here and there. Therefore a S. John, conscious of the truth of Christ's words, "I and the Father are one," (S. John *passim*, but cf. x. 30, xiv. 8 sqq.; xvii. 21, 22) also grasps the meaning of those other words of His: "The works that I do bear witness to Me, that the Father hath sent Me" (v. 36; x. 25).

Yet in no other Gospel are so few special miracles recorded. This may be due to the fact that S. John assumes they are already well known (cf. xx. 30). Another reason for their omission is that S. John evidently attached very little weight to miracles,

except as signs. He was not ignorant of them: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book," but he does not care to lay the stress on them so common in his day. He will not give them an exaggerated value. Hence this Gospel alone places them on a comparatively low plane, within human reach, "he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do" (xiv. 12).

The miracles recorded by S. John are : the turning of water into wine ; the healing of the nobleman's son ; the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda ; the feeding of 5,000 ; walking upon the waters ; sight restored to the blind man ; the resurrection of Lazarus ; the miraculous draught of fishes.

In every single instance, S. John's miracles are types. At all times, they have been interpreted in a symbolical and spiritual sense, as well as literally, by scholars who recognize the symbolism, the spiritual inner meaning, which pervades S. John's reading of the Life of Christ. The miracles in this Gospel have well been called : "acted parables."

According to this Evangelist, our Lord Himself gives a spiritual and sacramental interpretation to the feeding of the five thousand : "*I am the Bread of Life.*" In the same manner, our Lord in this Gospel spiritualizes Jacob's Ladder (i. 51), the Temple (ii. 21), the Brazen Serpent (iii. 14).

May we not, then, in this spiritual and symbolic

Gospel, without any stretch of the imagination, interpret the miracles in this wise? e.g. :—

The giving of sight to the blind = " I am the Light of the World."

The raising of Lazarus = " I am the Resurrection and the Life."

The miraculous draught of fishes = " Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men " (S. Mark i. 16, 17).

Similarly, in the turning of water into wine, men have ever detected a far deeper spiritual meaning than meets the eye.

A significant feature in S. John, which still further confirms this view, is the fact that he seldom stops at the bare mention of the miracles. He shows Christ going beyond the miracles themselves to something more important. For instance, the sick man at the pool, and the " man which was blind from his birth," after they are healed, are not allowed to steal away with the mere restoration of their bodily health. Christ promptly finds them again and leads them to higher spiritual blessings still.

(d) *Discourses.* If ever Evangelist was " spirit-bearing " (i.e. inspired), we should say it was the author of S. John. But in his discourses of our Lord his most fervent admirer and disciple must feel that S. John is treading on ground where it is hard to follow him.

We have already seen that, among the ancients,

it was a well-recognized and therefore perfectly legitimate literary device for historians to place fictitious speeches in the mouth of their characters. Thucydides gives us the tenor only of Pericles' funeral oration, yet he professes to report its actual words. Similarly, "the great discourses throughout the Acts are composed by S. Luke" (Harnack^e), though they fairly represent the gist of what was actually said. At any rate, "he makes S. Peter speak differently from S. Paul" (Harnack^e). Once more, Plato's "Socrates" is truer to life and far more historically real than Xenophon's, though no one can well assert that Plato wished all to be taken as historical which he puts into the mouth of Socrates. Many of the situations are clearly of his own invention. No one would ever dream of blaming Plato for adopting such a course. On the contrary, Plato's truth of idea is so infinitely more true than Xenophon's truth of fact that; we are more than grateful to him for the magnificent Life he has written of his sublime Master whom he so perfectly understood.

So with S. John, "the Plato of the Twelve." He knows and understands the true inner Christ as our Synoptists do not. To him, our Lord is the outward Jesus Whom the Synoptists see, but He is infinitely more. Indeed it is precisely because S. John has eyes to see the Christ behind and beneath the outward Jesus, that he writes a life

^e Harnack, "Luke the Physician," p. 129.

of our Lord for all times and all peoples. None the less, candour compels us to own that S. John, in the intensity of his love and reverence for his Divine Master, is zealous overmuch in his version of our Lord's Discourses. He treats Christ's utterances with too much freedom, and idealizes them almost beyond recognition^f.

The whole Synoptic atmosphere is changed. The style of our Lord's utterances, the matter of their contents, the tone of thought, the platform, the audience are all new, totally different from anything with which we are familiar. The simplicity of our Lord's gnomic style is gone, the parables have vanished, so has the plain direct moral teaching^g. In the place of

^f We are well aware that many will protest against this view as untrue. We can but refer them to Prof. Burkitt's "Gospel History and its Transmission," p. 227 sq., where the case is well argued. Cf. Westcott, "it is often impossible not to feel that the Evangelist is in fact commenting on and explaining the testimony which he records."

^g The following 27 passages have been collated in which S. John's "sayings of Jesus" are said almost to coincide with the Synoptists': John ii. 19=Matth. xxvi. 61, Mark xiv. 58; John iii. 18=Mark xvi. 16; John iv. 44=Matth. xiii. 57, Mark vi. 4, Luke iv. 24; John v. 8=Matth. ix. 6, Mark ii. 9, Luke v. 24; John vi. 20=Matth. xiv. 27, Mark vi. 50. John vi. 35=Matth. v. 6, Luke vi. 21; John vi. 37=Matth. xi. 28, 29; John vi. 46=Matth. xi. 27; John xii. 8=Matth. xxvi. 11; John xii. 25=Matth. x. 39, Mark viii. 35, Luke ix. 24; John xii. 27=Matth. xxvi. 38, Mark xiv. 34; John xiii. 3=Matth. xi. 27; John xiii. 16=Matth. x. 24; John xiii. 20=Matth. x. 40; John xiii. 21=Matth. xxvi. 21; John xiii. 38=Matth. xxvi. 34; John xiv. 18=Matth. xxviii. 20; John xiv. 28=Mark xiii. 32; John xiv. 31=Matth. xxvi. 46; John xv. 20=Matth. x. 25; John xv. 21=Matth. x. 22; John xvi. 32=Matth. xxvi. 31; John xvii. 2=Matth. xxviii. 13; John xviii. 11=Matth. xxvi. 52; John xviii. 20

our Lord's pithy sayings and homely illustrations we have a series of elaborate and systematic theological meditations or disputations. More than this, in S. John's discourses the human subjective element is so apparent that frequently, as Westcott notes, we are not able to say where our Lord's utterances end and S. John's own words begin.

Many attempts have been made to get over these difficulties. Among others, the following reasons have been advanced in defence of S. John's method in his report of the Discourses.

(1) Here, as elsewhere, he knows that the subjective element in his discourses will deceive no one. Our Lord's utterances are perfectly familiar to all his readers, they are household words in the Christian Church.

(2) S. John, a deep spiritual thinker, is writing his Gospel expressly to combat the speculative errors of heretics of his own day. He fights these false philosophies with their own weapons, uses their own vocabulary, and moves in a region of abstract thought even as they do.

(3) S. John is writing sixty years after the events, and he can hardly be expected to remember the exact words of the original sayings. Our Lord's

=Matth. xxvi. 55; John xviii. 37=Matth. xxvii. 11; John xx. 23
=Matth. xviii. 18.

But a comparison of these passages reveals only a spiritual, seldom a literal coincidence. If the Synoptists' version is trustworthy, S. John treats our Lord's utterances very freely, and it is not true that in these 27 sayings the words of S. John and the Synoptists "are almost identically the same."

utterances had sunk deep into his soul at the time. They are now "memories which have grown with his growth, and ripened from the seed into the fruit." He has so lovingly made Christ's words his own, that he has thoroughly assimilated them, and they are part and parcel of his very being. He has forgotten their letter, but he is steeped in their spirit. For fifty years and more, he has used our Lord's sayings in his daily teaching and preaching. All unconsciously, he has allowed his own meditations on them to colour the words themselves. Therefore, in S. John, we see our Lord's discourses shaped by years of reflection, illuminated by the experience of a lifetime, blended with that spiritual interpretation which is so characteristic of this Evangelist.

Two other pleas have been advanced in support of the view that our Lord's discourses are *historically* true :—

(4) The style and matter of the Johannine discourses are new, and for this reason. The discourses themselves were delivered by our Lord under perfectly new circumstances, in an environment of which our Synoptists know nothing. In the Galilean ministry, which alone is recorded by the Synoptists, our Lord is addressing simple people who "hear Him gladly" as a great Prophet. In the Judæan Ministry of S. John's Gospel, He is speaking to educated Jerusalem Jews and learned theologians, born and bred in the school of the scribes, men who do not welcome our Lord, like the friendly Galileans, but view Him

with suspicion and hatred as a revolutionary reformer. Naturally, then, our Lord adapts Himself to His hearers. In Galilee, His Teaching is simple, homely, sympathetic. In Judæa, in the presence of learned but bigoted Jews, He stands on the defensive and adopts the subtle dialectical methods of His opponents.

This plea is ingenious but, unfortunately, it does not cover the facts. The one discourse which is singled out in this very Gospel as a "hard saying" (vi. 60) is precisely an address which was delivered, not to Jerusalem scribes or Pharisees, but to Galilean multitudes (vi. 1).

(5) The second plea seems more to the point. It is this. In Christ's Teaching there were always, it is alleged, two elements, an exoteric and an esoteric form of doctrine. The one was popular and practical, the other more or less mystical. "If I have told you *earthly things* and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of *heavenly things*?" (John iii. 12). Naturally, the *earthly things* (i.e. things connected with our every day conduct and practical experience,) would sink into thousands of hearts and appeal to the general hearer and to the simple-minded Synoptists. The deeper discourses on *heavenly things* (i.e. things connected with the nature of God and His relation to the human soul,) would, on the other hand, be imperfectly understood from the first, and fall on soil not ready to receive such seed. None but minds of deep

spiritual insight would grasp and treasure the full significance of these utterances. Therefore it is only a S. John of peculiar depth and intensity of soul who records them, and only after long meditation, when experience has thrown light upon them.

But this plausible plea also breaks down. Some of our Lord's deepest and hardest sayings are precisely those recorded in the Synoptists, e.g. in the Sermon on the Mount. To some minds, the "heavenly things" may seem more impressively set before us in S. John, but nothing in the fourth Gospel transcends, if it equals, the sublimity of S. Matth. xi. 25—30 (cf. S. Luke x. 21 sqq.). The Synoptists abound in these "heavenly" sayings, and reveal to us a Christ every whit as sublime in character and prerogatives as anything in S. John^b.

We must seek our clue to the Johannine discourses elsewhere. We have already likened the Synoptic

^b It has often been urged that the Synoptists know nothing of S. John's:—(1) *soteriology*. In the Synoptists, say these critics, Christ preaches the Kingdom of God and its righteousness. In S. John, Christ preaches Himself as our personal Saviour (but see S. Matth. xi. 25—30, xx. 28, xxvi. 28). (2) *John's doctrine of Christ's pre-existence* (but all the Synoptists preach Christ the "Son of God"). (3) *John's spiritual eschatology*. In the Synoptists, say they, the Coming of Christ is to be a visible and material Coming, in John it is a coming of Christ in the Spirit (but see 1 John ii. 28; iii. 2; cf. John xxi. 23). In all these instances, S. John's theology shows a great advance, a marked development, but these doctrines are all contained in the germ in the Synoptists, and pronouncedly in S. Paul. (On the close connection between S. John and S. Paul see Harnack, and B. W. Bacon especially.)

picture to a photograph, and S. John's to an impressionist portrait. The simile may prove helpful in this connection. The success of a photograph depends mainly upon the perfection with which it will correctly depict upon the plate images of objects standing at different depths within the photographer's field of view. The impressionist artist cannot do this. The physical structure of the eye forbids it. He has to survey his field, select what he considers the point of view of chief importance for his purpose, enforce that, lay all the emphasis on it, and allow everything else to fall more or less out of focus in a kind of blur.

Now S. John throughout his Gospel has concentrated his attention on the Divine Glory of the Incarnate Word and made that his leading line. It is the one point of view that matters in his eyes, and *there* the result achieved is immeasurably superior to anything in the Synoptists. His presentation of the Eternal Christ appeals to all hearts. For century after century, this masterpiece of extraordinary intrinsic merit has brought counsel, conviction and comfort to multitudes. But S. John has been forced to limit his field of view to attain this supreme end, and we must not look for the elaboration of detail in his picture which we are accustomed to find in the Synoptists. It is not there.

We said in a previous chapter that we must judge the artist by his finished picture ; on that he stands or falls. Let us apply that test to S. John.

There is an old tradition, quoted by Clement of Alexandria and Origen,—it is a legend, but it is true in idea,—telling us that “John last, having observed that the *bodily* things had been set forth in the Gospels, and exhorted thereto by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, produced a *spiritual* Gospel.”

In John's day, oral tradition, the New Testament of the Christian Church, fully recorded all the facts of the Life of Jesus, and far more completely than do our four Gospels. S. Paul's Epistles show that even Gentile Christians in early days were so thoroughly catechized that they knew the Scriptures generally, and the facts of the Life of Christ in particular, a great deal better than we do nowadays. There were also scores of written *historical* gospels of varying value, our three among the number, scattered broadcast here and there in various localities. There was no need to add one more to their number.

What the Christian world did need was some guide to the full and unspeakable significance of these familiar facts. Men yearned for some clue to the profound eternal meaning of the Life of our Lord, and especially of the sayings of Christ, which were household words. The teaching of our Lord, His pithy sayings, His parables, His practical moral utterances had long since been collected. They were as well known to his readers as to S. John himself. (But the deeper spring of spiritual thought which they enclosed, their veiled inner meaning, wanted bringing out. This was the task S. John set him-

self. Who was so fit to cope with it as he? We see how admirably he does it in his discourses.

S. John's age was a philosophic age. He lived among thoughtful Greeks. Their spiritual needs were more exacting than those of earlier Christian generations, when a more elementary presentation of the facts sufficed. No doubt, many of the questions discussed in John were already being asked in former days, but only by a few Christians confined to a comparatively limited circle. Now speculation was rife and the spirit of Gnosticism was in the air.

The age was ripe for a new presentation of the Gospel-story which should meet the deepest needs of its day. The crisis called for a philosopher-theologian who should voice and interpret the eternal Gospel truths to living men in their own living language. On all hands heretics were denying Christ. All true Christians felt that a full answer to the errors of these intellectual false teachers was ready to hand in the Apostolic Gospel-story. But they themselves lacked the power to express it adequately in words. The new era cried for a good and great man, a thinker with clearness of vision and greatness of soul, who could probe to the heart of things and overthrow error by his irresistible presentation of the eternal counter-truths. His witness must be true. He must "testify that he hath seen" and speak with inspired authority.

Such a man was "S. John." By Heaven's pre-
appointment, he comes forward as the redeemer of

his time and to pave the road to Christ for all times and all peoples. He combats error by exposing its falsehood, and (testifying that he knows and has seen) he lays down positive truths in its stead. At once he instinctively probes to the root of all spiritual error, and sees its one remedy. He is convinced that all error proceeds from a wrong conception, in some shape or form, of the true nature of Christ. If men could only see Christ rightly in the true light, see Him as the God He actually is, it would at once sap the very foundations of error. 'The Word was made Flesh,' the Incarnation of God, this, to a S. John, is the corner-stone of all faith, the solvent of all unbelief.

On this central fact, therefore, S. John focuses his gaze. How is he to develope his theme? He has no laboured process to go through, no constructive scheme to develope. He falls back on what *he* knows best of all, his own personal experience. "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life: that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you"¹ (cf. John i. 14).

Be the "bosom disciple" whom he may, the author of S. John is now generally admitted to have been a "disciple of our Lord," even by the most advanced

¹ There is no need of an apology for quoting 1 S. John. It is on all hands admitted to be an Appendix to the Gospel, and part and parcel of it.

critics adverse to the Johannine authorship. In this Gospel the disciple reveals to us the Christ as he, an eye-witness, knows Him and has seen Him. He gives us the total impression which our Lord stamped upon his own mind and heart. He does not argue, like S. Paul; he simply bears witness. He convincingly brings the truth home to our hearts by the plain direct statement of his own knowledge of Christ, his own personal experience of the God-Man as he, the "beloved disciple," a deeply-thoughtful eye-witness, knows Him.

True, the point of view which S. John has deliberately chosen lays his Gospel open to what many may consider to be two serious objections. (1) He has concentrated the whole of his attention on one object, the Personality of Christ. Therefore he sacrifices everything else as secondary, and the historical facts fall out of focus and are blurred. (2) More than this, we have to reckon with another factor in this Portrait of the Christ as sketched by John. The subjective element comes in largely. His Gospel is a spiritual appeal to men's inmost hearts, based on his own personal experience. We have the presentation of the Personality of Jesus, it is true, *but only as seen through John's eyes*. This is a fair criticism and we candidly admit its force. But, if we press this argument home consistently, and drive it to its logical conclusions, we must eye all Scripture with suspicion. Throughout the Bible "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." The human factor peeps through

Bible pages everywhere. Isaiah and the Psalms are full of the subjective element. As we have seen again and again in Bible-books, the truth which they reveal comes to us tinged with the individuality of the writers. Before reaching us, the Divine message has passed through the mind of a David or an Ezekiel, a S. James or a S. Paul. A subjective element there undoubtedly is in S. John as in all other inspired writers. No amount of inspiration can exempt a man from this limitation. Every artist has his predilections. These he reads into all he sees and introduces them into his picture. The true artist is he who can combine with this personal factor the keenest power of seeing things as they actually are. We believe John has this divine gift.

The best proof that John's Portrait is true in itself lies in the unchallengeable fact that the universal consent of mankind has endorsed his portraiture of our Lord. In the words of our Westminster Confession: "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of Holy Scripture is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness in our own hearts." Judged by this test, S. John's witness to Christ bears God's own stamp and mint-mark.

We may also test its intrinsic value in another way. Carlyle, in a passage already quoted, says that "a true portrait is as a lighted candle by which the biographies of the man portrayed can for the

first time be read intelligibly, and some human interpretation be made of them." It is by the light of the candle of John's Portrait of the Christ that we can best and most intelligibly read the biographies of the Christ in the Synoptists. We can ask for no better proof of the historical truth of John's work. His ideal *is* the real.

With S. John's clue to the Personality of Christ as our guide,—“The Word was made Flesh”—we can now for the first time understand how it was that Jesus exercised such a marvellous power and attraction over all who came into His Presence, the hold He had on His generation, the effect He has had on history. Although they do not give us the key to it, all the Synoptists agree on the stupendous impression Christ made, the magnetic influence He exercised on His contemporaries of all classes and grades. Here are a few instances taken at random from the Synoptic pages. A scribe comes to Christ and says: “Master, I will follow Thee, whithersoever Thou goest” (Matth. viii. 19). A rich young man runs, and *kneeling* says, “Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mark x. 17 = Matth. xix. 16). The multitudes are convinced He is Elijah or one of the great Prophets (Mark viii. 28). The Roman officer at the Cross exclaims, “Truly, this man was the Son of God” (Mark xv. 39 ; cf. Matth. xxvii. 54). The scribes and Pharisees are awed by His amazing Personality, and can only explain it away by ascribing His Power to Satanic agency (S. Matth. xii. 24).

At sight of His mighty works, the people are amazed and glorify God saying, "We never saw it on this fashion" (Mark ii. 12). Herod is certain Christ is John the Baptist risen from the dead (Mark vi. 16). The demoniacs everywhere exclaim: "I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mark i. 24; cf. v. 7). The blind man calls out "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me" (Mark x. 47). Sinners and outcasts are instinctively drawn to Him, feeling that *He* is their friend.

What was there in Jesus to produce such a tremendous and universal impression? What was the secret of Christ's magnetic power? His Personality and nothing else,—not His works, not His words, but the psychic force within Himself from which they sprang. Christ's words and works, as S. John truly says, were but the outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual Godhead within. It was the Divine Fire in Christ's own soul that "made the hearts of others burn within them as He spake with them by the way." It was because His own character was so full of Light and Love and Life that He could call out all that was best in others. It was because the fulness of God dwelt in Him that, consciously or unconsciously, all who came near Him were inspired by His influence, while those who opened their hearts to this influence of His Spirit were conscious of a new birth and a consecration.

Now what is this but reading the Synoptists by

the light of S. John's revelation: "The Word was made Flesh"? John's Portrait of the Christ is, indeed, a lighted candle pouring a flood of new light upon the other three Evangelists. He does more than this, he brings a key to open many of the closed doors of history and of our everyday life.

A S. Mark is infinitely more true to historical fact than a John. Mark's portrait of the Strong Son of God, immortal Love, is a masterpiece. We cannot possibly do without it, for it brings us back to the historical Christ as men saw Him here on earth, the Christ seen from without inwards. But the spiritually enlightened "bosom disciple" equally brings us "back to Christ," the Christ we all want to know, the Christ seen from within outwards.

We want both the Synoptists and S. John for the true and complete historical picture of our Lord. In themselves, they are each perfectly intelligible wholes. True, but the matter-of-fact Synoptists are needed to supplement spiritual S. John, while S. John is wanted to interpret the Synoptists and guide us into the full significance of their Gospel-story.

CHAPTER XXIV.

S. JOHN — DATA FOR SOLUTION OF
PROBLEM: WHO IS ITS AUTHOR?

Argument.

Two reasons which enhance the value of S. John's spiritual Gospel for us to-day—Clues to its author furnished by the internal evidence: (1) He is a Jew, (2) writing for non-Jewish readers. (3) He is familiar with Palestine (and especially Jerusalem), and its Jewish customs and institutions. (4) He is evidently an eye-witness of the Ministry, (5) a man of Greek culture and a philosopher, with a working knowledge of Philo's philosophy—The Philonic element in S. John examined and explained.

Is tradition right in ascribing this Gospel to S. John the Apostle? Three objections considered. The solution of the problem largely resolves itself into the question whether S. John left Jerusalem and resided at Ephesus or not. The external evidence on this point is inconclusive. On the whole, the balance of evidence seems to dip slightly in favour of tradition. Note on the style of the Fourth Gospel.

CHAPTER XXIV.

S. JOHN—DATA FOR SOLUTION OF PROBLEM: WHO IS ITS AUTHOR?

IF the interpretation of the fourth Gospel, as given in the preceding chapter, be correct, the question of its authorship is a secondary matter. The value of the book lies in its intrinsic worth and is independent of its author. The Gospel is professedly a spiritual, not a historical document, and this enhances its value to us to-day, for two reasons.

(a) The author expressly tells us he is writing to confirm believers (xx. 31). In John's day, as now, many there were who envied the first generation of Christians their great privilege of having seen Christ in the flesh. They were inclined to regard their own position in that respect as a loss and a hindrance. In his Gospel S. John points out to them a better way of facing the situation. The whole tenor of his teaching in it is this: "Blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed" (xx. 29). As if he had adopted S. Paul's motto, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more," S. John all but ignores the historical Jesus in the emphasis he lays on the spiritual Christ. He has taken to heart our Lord's words to Thomas. John proclaims aloud to his

readers, and through them to us, that it is infinitely better to see Christ with the eye of the soul than with the eye of the body. He assures us it is far better to have a personal knowledge of the Christ Whom we have not seen, than to have companied with Him all the time He was on earth or to be able to describe with the accuracy of an eye-witness every detail of His Ministry.

(*b*) Another lesson this spiritual Gospel brings home to us to-day. To a great many Christians, the religion of Christ seems to consist mainly of historical facts. They assure us that if this or that historical detail in a Gospel is proved to be false, or if the incidents in S. John cannot be made to harmonize with what is recorded in the Synoptists, then Christianity is threatened^a. The Church of Christ, says S. John in so many words, is not committed to a Faith dependent upon a multiplicity of historical incidents, each of which every man must know and believe to his soul's health. It is founded on belief in a Person, and on nothing else.

On these grounds, the question of the authorship of S. John becomes a matter of purely academic interest, and in no way affects its value. A book dealing with the Gospels would, however, be incomplete without some discussion of this moot point, and we shall treat it as briefly as we can.

^a See esp. "The entangling alliance of History and Religion." *Hibbert Journal*, Jan. 1907.

From the Gospel itself the following facts may be gleaned respecting its author :—

(1) *His intimate knowledge of Scripture argues him a Jew*^b.

He sees prophecy fulfilled in Christ's Life in a way that reminds us forcibly of S. Matthew. There are a large number of direct quotations from the Old Testament, and they are close to the original Hebrew, and not the Greek Septuagint^c. In the nineteenth chapter alone, there are four direct references to prophecy, viz. xix. 24, 28, 36, 37 ; but they pervade the whole Gospel. "The Scripture cannot be broken" (x. 35) is one of the author's keynotes.

(2) *He is a Jew, writing for readers not dwelling in Jewish lands.*

^b Is the author of S. John *anti-Jewish*? Yes, decidedly, say e.g. Reuss, Hilgenfeld, Renan, Baur. He speaks of "*the Jews*" and "*your law*" as if Judaism were a foreign and semi-pagan religion. (1) True, S. John at times does use the term "*the Jews*" in a hostile sense ; but is it not a fact that, throughout, the Jews *were* hostile to his Master, Christ? Besides, S. John speaks favourably of the Jews, e.g. i. 47, "an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile"; cf. iv. 22, "salvation is of the Jews"; and "*we* know what we worship." (2) In S. John's pages, Christ does *not* belittle the Law ; e.g. "Is it not written in your Law . . . and the Scripture cannot be broken" (x. 34, 35), cf. v. 39, 46, 47, where Christ appeals to the Mosaic Law itself as testifying of Him. John viii. 19, 44 ; xv. 21, &c., do not attack Jews or the Jewish religion as such, but only the false and carnal Judaism,—and almost in the very words of the older Jewish prophets.

^c See esp. John vi. 45 (Is. liv. 13) ; xii. 40 (Is. vi. 10) ; xiii. 18 (Ps. xli. 9) ; xix. 37 (Zech. xii. 10).

He is fully acquainted with Jewish customs and institutions, but frequently explains them for the benefit of readers not familiar with them : e.g. " There were set there six water-pots of stone, *after the manner of the purifying of the Jews*" (ii. 6). " How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? *for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans*" (iv. 9). " They took the Body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, *as the manner of the Jews is to bury*" (cf. i. 41 ; ix. 7 ; xix. 13, 17).

From vii. 23—27 we see that he was not only acquainted with the detail that circumcision could be performed on the Sabbath-day, though no healing could be done on that day (ix. 14), but that he also knows all the varying verdicts about Christ, current among the populace of Jerusalem. He is aware of the decision of the Jews to expel Christ's followers from their synagogues (ix. 22) ; the scruples of the Jews about going into Gentile houses (xviii. 28) ; the fact that a Rabbi does not talk to a woman (iv. 27) ; the contempt of Scribes and Pharisees for those who " know not the Law " (vii. 49) ; the addition of an eighth day to the Feast of Tabernacles (vii. 37) ; the selling of oxen and changing of money in the Temple (ii. 14).

(3) *He knows the topography of Palestine generally, and of Jerusalem in particular.*

He displays a personal knowledge of the topo-

graphy of the Bethesda pool, with its five porches, by the sheep-market (v. 2); the pool of Siloam (ix. 7); the Solomon porch of the Temple (x. 23); the Temple - treasury (viii. 20). He knows that the Temple was forty-six years abuilding, and that it is "a place whither the Jews always resort" (xviii. 20). He is acquainted with Ænon near Salim (iii. 23); and *two* Bethanys^d (i. 28 R.V.). He is aware that there is a slope from the high ground on which Cana stood to Capernaum (ii. 12). He knows Bethany is "nigh about 15 furlongs" from Jerusalem; that 25—30 furlongs bring you half-way across the Sea of Galilee (vi. 19, cf. Matt. xiv. 24); that the city Ephraim is near the wilderness (xi. 54); that one must cross the Cedron from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives (xviii. 1). He speaks of *Cana of Galilee* (ii. 1) and *Bethsaida of Galilee*, because he is aware that there are other places of the same name. The picture of the Samaritan scenery in Chapter IV. is so true to life that Renan declares: "Only a Jew who has often passed the entrance of the valley of Sichem could have written that."

(4) *He is familiar with the various Jewish Feasts*^e.

The passover, and its customs (ii. 13; vi. 4; xii. 1; xviii. 39); the feast of Tabernacles (vii. 2); the feast

^d This point has been brought against "S. John" as a proof of topographical ignorance, on the plea that there was only one Bethany. If there were two Cæsareas, two Antiochs, two Canas, two Bethsaidas, why not two Bethanys?

^e These Jewish Feasts in S. John are a valuable clue. From the

of Dedication "in the winter" (x. 22). More than this, John vii. 37, 38, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink," uttered "on the last day, the great day of the Feast of Tabernacles," shows that our author was familiar with the ceremonial drawing of water from the pool of Siloam at that Festival. Similarly, it is not without significance that Christ's announcement: "I am the Light of the World," is made to coincide with the Feast of Dedication, when the illuminations were so brilliant that it was called the "Feast of Lights[†]."

Up to now, we have drawn our inferences only

Synoptists we should gather that our Lord's Ministry lasted but little over a year; from S. John we see it covered three years. The latter is the more probable. John's key-dates are therefore worth noting:—

	(Eng. month. Approximately.)
(1) John ii. 12, 13, a first Passover, marking the inauguration of the Ministry. Jesus went up to Jerusalem for this Passover.	(April.)
(2) John v. 1, "a feast of the Jews" (Purim). Jesus was in Jerusalem.	(March.)
(3) John vi. 4, a second Passover, which Christ spent in Galilee, because of Jewish hostility.	
(4) John vii. 2, Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus goes up secretly to Jerusalem.	(Oct.)
(5) John x. 22, Feast of Dedication. Jesus is in Jerusalem.	(Dec.)
(6) John xii. 1, The third Passover. Jesus is crucified (xviii. 39).	

[†] It may be urged that these utterances of our Lord are placed where they are, because these were precisely the occasions when they were spoken. But we have seen that oral-tradition chronology is arbitrary and artificial, and on no other point do Evangelists so differ.

from the *indirect* witness of the internal evidence of the Gospel itself, because it is unintentional testimony, and therefore all the more trustworthy.

If we turn to the direct evidence, our conclusions are the same. The author speaks of himself anonymously, but "the other disciple" of xviii. 15^g is generally admitted to be the author himself, so is "the other disciple, whom Jesus loved" of xix. 26, and xx. 2. From these passages we gather the following facts:—The author was (1) presumably one of the Twelve, and therefore a Jew by birth. (2) He was personally known to the high-priest, went in with Jesus into the palace, and it was through his intercession for S. Peter with the door-keeper that Simon was also allowed to enter the palace. (3) It was to his care that our Lord from the Cross committed His Mother. (4) He was an eye-witness of our Lord's appearances after the Resurrection.

On two occasions in this Gospel (i. 14 ; xix. 35) its author expressly assures us that he was an eye-witness, and the *indirect* internal evidence seems to bear out his statement. He frequently gives us the day and the hour when a particular incident occurred (e.g. i. 39 ; iv. 6 ; iv. 52 ; xix. 14 ; ii. 1 ; iii. 2). His picture of the melancholy moods of Thomas and the simplicity of Nathanael ; his intimate knowledge of the innermost thoughts, fears, and questionings of the Twelve, and their constant ignorance of Jesus'

^g v. sup. p. 419 n. xviii. 15 is now questioned by some scholars.

meaning (e.g. ii. 21 ; iv. 33 ; xi. 16 ; xii. 16 ; xvi. 17) ; also show clear traces of the eye-witness. In fact the whole Gospel is so full of minute and precise details that its author must either have been an eye-witness or a consummate romancer.

Thus everything in the Gospel points to a Jewish author who is an eye-witness of our Lord's Ministry, and a native of Palestine. At any rate, he is intimately acquainted with the Holy Land and especially Jerusalem.

(5) *The author of the Fourth Gospel is a man of Greek culture and a philosopher.*

A Jew philosopher-theologian is rare. The Hebrew intellectual and moral temperament is too practical to take any interest in pure philosophy. Semites are by nature essentially men of action, full of ardour and passion, with a superhuman power of adaptability. Hebrew literature fully bears this out. It is the literature of a people of a passionately emotional character, subordinating everything to action. The Jews have produced the finest lyrical poetry and some of the best moral writings in the world.

They may have no genuine philosophy of their own, because their intellectual sympathies do not lie in that direction, yet their literature clearly proves that "they could an if they would." With a practical eye on the facts that stare them in the face, their motto is "do the next thing," the duty that lies nearest thec. Yet they have at times seen all the

farther, above and beyond mortal ken, beholding "unspeakable things which it is not lawful for a man to utter," e.g. Job and S. Paul.

Always endowed with an immense reserve of power, acquired through ages of undaunted persistence under hard conditions in the infancy of the Semitic race, the Hebrew is gifted with a remarkable faculty of thriving amid strange surroundings and adapting himself to his environment. If occasion arises, the Jew has an innate genius of proving himself equal to any emergency and developing the most unexpected traits. Like the great Jew-Apostle, he can become "all things to all men," and meet even Greeks on their own philosophic ground.

In the Fourth Gospel we have an extremely interesting and rather singular illustration of these Jewish traits. (1) S. John has all the passion of a Jew. His is a great heart, and he yearns to kindle in others the fire of enthusiasm burning in his own soul. (2) He is also essentially a man of action, with a practical aim. His one wish is to build up his hearers in the Faith (xx. 31). He sees that Gnosticism and all heresy are built on a lie, the denial of the God-Man Jesus Christ. He means to expose that lie, and sap the foundations of error by a simple presentation of the truth. (3) But he combines with the passionate ardour and practical aims of the Jew an essentially un-Jewish characteristic. He has a deep insight into the heart of things, and the philosophic tone of thought of the Greek mind. True, he does not

see things altogether in the cold "dry light" of the pure philosopher : his deepest thoughts throb with feeling, and make him all the truer "seer." At certain altitudes of thought, feeling is the surest guide. A philosopher must also be a poet.

John's deep and yet clear feeling, his practical aims, the keenness and depth of his power of insight, the intensity of his nature,—all these make him the creative genius that can express in simple words the eternal truths which his soul has felt more deeply and keenly than others. These, too, are the gifts that make his Gospel-story strike such a responsive echo in sympathetic hearts.

S. John's Gospel is the first step, and a long step, towards the Philosophy of Christianity. As we have seen, it is ultimately based on historical facts, but it deals almost exclusively with eternal truths. S. John ignores contingent and temporal matters of fact, except in so far as they illustrate larger principles which give them a universal interpretation and bind them together into an organic whole. We have already laid so much stress on this feature in the Fourth Gospel that we need not dwell on it here.

There is, however, more than this. The whole tone of thought, even the vocabulary of S. John, is cast in a peculiar mould which seems to suggest that he was intimately acquainted with the philosophical terms and ideas of the Alexandrian school of Philo, and appropriated them.

The Philonic element in S. John. Philo (born

about 20 B.C.) was an Alexandrian Jew, a cultured Greek philosopher, and a devoted student of Plato^h. He was not a Christian, as early legends assert, but a confirmed and devout Hebrew of the Hebrews. He had to reconcile two creeds in which he firmly believed, (1) the Inspiration of the Bible, (2) the truths of Greek philosophy. This he achieved by wedding Judaism to Greek thought, but he also borrowed largely from Oriental religions. He paved the way for Gnosticism by teaching, in the language of Platonic idealism interpreted in the light of Oriental dualism, that matter is altogether negative and impure, God is absolutely perfect but unknowable, while the body is the prison of the soul and the source of all evil.

In his book on the Creation, Philo sets himself a hard task. As a devout Jew, he has to keep in sight two facts: (1) a formless chaos (Gen. i. 2), (2) a God essentially perfect, but so unknowable that we only know that He is, not what He is.

How is the gulf between the two to be bridged? How, in the words of Plato, is the mortal to be woven into the immortal?

The devout Philo reads his Bible, and there finds his clue. In the Old Testament he discovers three distinct groups of passages clearly indicating that

^h Hence the proverb: "either Philo platonizes or Plato philonizes." In one instance, Philo speaks of "*the immortal ideas* (*ἀθάνατοι λόγοι*) which we (Jews) call *angels*," and Godet rightly seems to see here Philo's own acknowledgment of his loan from Plato.

there were subordinate fellow-workers with God in the work of Creation.

(a) In Gen. i. 3, Scripture expressly says that God created the world through His Word. In Ps. xxxiii. 6, and cxlvii. 15—18, the Word of God is all but personified for the same creative purpose: "By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made."

(b) The Wisdom of God of Prov. viii. 22 sqq. is still more distinctly personified: "I was set up from everlasting, or ever the world was. The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way. When there were no depths, I was brought forth, . . . before the hills was I brought forth, while as yet He had not made the earth. . . . Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (cf. Job xxviii. 20 sqq.).

(c) This personification of One Who is in a sense the same as God, yet distinct, is also clearly seen in the Angel of the Presence, the Angel of Jehovah, in and through whom God manifests Himself to men throughout the Old Testament (e.g. Gen. xvi. 7—14; xviii. 1; xxii. 11—15; xxxii. 24—30; Exod. iii. 2; Judg. ii. 1—4; v. 23; vi. 11—24; xiii. 3). In Exod. xxiii. 20 sqq. we read of this Angel of the Presence: "Mine Angel shall go before thee (23), beware of Him and obey His voice. . . . for My Name is in Him" (21).

Here, in the Old Testament itself, are three fellow-workers together with God explicitly mentioned by

name: (1) The Word of God; (2) the Wisdom of God; (3) the Angel of the Presence; three Beings identical with Him, yet distinct from Jehovah Himself.

There, for Philo, is the key to the problem of Creation, for it solves the apparently insoluble mystery: "How can the mortal be woven into the immortal?" God and matter are poles apart, but the connecting link is now clear to Philo. God created this material Universe, but without in any way coming into personal touch with impure and defiling matter. The Universe is one whole: God is the meaning of it: but between God and matter there is a whole series of intermediary agents, subordinate to Him, through whom He pervades the Universe and quickens everything into life. At the head of this hierarchy, and next to God, is "God's Word," "by Whom God made all things." Under the Logos or Word come a number of lower agencies, forming a complete chain in a descending scale of dignity and authority: "thrones, dominions, principalities, powers," kinds of angels acting as links between God and matter. One and all of these had their share, under God, in the work of Creation. Hence the plural form in Gen. i. 26: "Let *us* make man."

Thus the whole Universe is bound together into a harmonious cosmos. God, the First Cause, comes first as the source of all things. Next to Him is the Logos, or Word. He is of the same essence with God Himself, yet subordinate to Him, as proceeding from God. In its turn, the Word is the cause of all beneath it, and so on with the rest.

Now, seeing that the Word is the agent "by Whom all things were made," it naturally follows, according to Philo, that "the Word was with God before all things were made." "In the beginning was the Word." Similarly, since the Word is part and parcel of God's essence, yet secondary to Him, Philo calls the Word "the Son of God"; His "first-begotten Son"; "the image and likeness of God"; the "fulness of God."

In Philo's writings we read that the Word dwells in Heaven, but also in the souls of men. He is eternal. All power and knowledge is given unto Him, and He reveals God unto men. He is ever at work. He instructs, reproveth, purifies men. He is free from all taint of sin. He is High-Priest towards God, and Paraclete or Comforter to men; the source of all joy and peace; the Bridegroom, Guide, Shepherd, Physician. The Logos is also constantly spoken of as: The Light, the Life, the Truth; the cause of our oneness with God and with one another. He is the giver of the Heavenly Bread.

Sometimes Philo speaks of the Word as if He were a Person, at other times as if He were not a Person, and he often vacillates between the two.

Thus there clearly exist the most striking points of likeness between Philo's and S. John's "Word".

¹ "Word," as a title of Christ, is found in the three Johannine writings, *and in them only in the N.T.* (e.g. John i. 1; 1 John i. 1; Rev. xix. 13). This fact in itself is a strong connecting link between them.

We may draw the link between Philo and John still closer by noting two other main features in Philo.

(a) *Philo's love of allegory and symbolism.* Following in the steps of Jewish rabbis, Philo gives the reins to his imagination in his interpretation of Scripture. The anthropomorphism of the Bible repels him. He eliminates it by teaching that all Scripture has a lower or literal meaning and a higher or allegorical interpretation. Thus Abram leaving Haran for the Promised Land is a symbol of the soul imprisoned in the body seeking for reunion with God. Adam is the figure of our carnal nature, Egypt the emblem of our bodily prison, Canaan the type of the enfranchised soul. Similarly, when Jacob says: "with my staff I passed over this Jordan," Philo remarks that it would be a poor thing to take the words literally. Jordan typifies all that is material and base, the "staff" stands as an emblem of discipline, and Jacob's meaning is that by keeping his body in subjection he has won the mastery over his lower nature.

According to Philo, it is the task of wisdom to penetrate through the husk of the letter of the Bible to the kernel of its secret inner meaning. All details must be spiritualized, especially if anything in Scripture appears to be trivial (e.g. Sarah's laughter) or derogatory to God (e.g. His eating a meal in Abram's tent).

(b) *Philo's predilection for numbers.* Philo reduces the symbolism of number to an art, and attaches a

mystic sacred virtue to the number seven. This number is the image of God. It is everywhere imprinted upon Creation. There are seven stars in the Bear and the Pleiades. There are seven planets, and seven zones marking the divisions of the sky ; seven days in the week ; seven parts in the human head (two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth).

It would be idle to deny the patent fact that there is the closest affinity, in many respects, between Philo and S. John. John's phraseology, symbolism and spiritualizing of historical details all betray a familiarity with Philonic conceptions.

On the other hand, Philo's and John's Logos-creeds are as wide apart as light and darkness. Philo's doctrine of God starts from the idea that God is a Being of Whom we can know absolutely nothing. We can only say that He is not like anything we can conceive, for to predicate any quality of God would be to reduce Him to the sphere of beings like ourselves. We are thus left with a thin, lifeless, philosophic conception of God, mostly unintelligible.

So it is with Philo's terms "Word, Light, Life," and so forth. Philo is so vague and self-contradictory in his definition of them that we have but the faintest conception of what he really means. At times we fancy that it is only a primitive and picturesque way of describing what we should now call the laws of Nature according to which God rules the universe.

At other times Philo's "logoi" or "words" seem to be nothing but Plato's Ideas in a new and more dramatic form. It is all a weird medley of mysticism, symbolism, Scripture, Platonic philosophy and Oriental dualism. We are moving in a world peopled with beings which evaporate into thin misty abstractions and dead philosophical generalisations as soon as we approach them.

S. John takes these dead things, breathes life into them, and they stand before us as real, living, inspiring truths.

We need only instance one fact to show how utterly unlike is S. John's "Word" to Philo's "Logos." In S. John we read; "the Word was made Flesh." Philo would have stared aghast at the bare suggestion of such an idea. In his eyes, matter was gross and impure, while the body was the source of all evil. S. John's "Incarnation of the Word," embodying the Logos in negative and impure matter, would have seemed to him nothing short of blasphemy and sacrilege.

To sum up. S. John uses the expression Logos, and many other Philonic terms, because Philonism was in the air in his day. The "Word" of Philo admirably suited S. John's purpose as a vehicle to convey his leading idea: "I (Christ) and the Father are one."

S. John was probably not well versed in Philo's philosophy, but it was as much in the minds and mouths of thinking men of that generation as "Evo-

lution" nowadays. Even as we naturally avail ourselves of such rich and suggestive phrases as "natural selection," "survival of the fittest," "adaptation to environment," "struggle for existence," &c., without necessarily subscribing to Evolutionism as commonly interpreted, so it is with John's use of Philonic phraseology. He found the Philonic terms "Word," "Life," "Light," "Truth," "World," household words among his Greek contemporaries and neighbours. Like a wise teacher, he availed himself of this material ready to hand, admirably adapted to his purpose, and turned its clay into gold.

We therefore gather the following facts from the indirect testimony of the internal evidence of the Fourth Gospel. Its author is a Jew familiar with Palestine and its institutions. He is apparently writing for non-Jewish readers. He is also a philosopher-theologian with a good working knowledge of the Alexandrian philosophy of Philo.

If we add to this indirect evidence the testimony which the author bears to himself in this Gospel, we obtain other valuable clues as to his identity. He professes to be an eye-witness of our Lord's Ministry and a personal disciple of our Lord (i. 14, xix. 35). He also seems to speak of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

Indeed, a further step forwards is permissible. Lightfoot, Westcott, and Sanday are convinced that the last chapter of S. John is by the same hand as

the rest of the Gospel, though added at a later date. If this point be conceded, the author in John xxi. makes a direct claim to be "the disciple whom Jesus loved, which also leaned on His breast at supper."

The majority of critics, however, are not prepared to go so far as these three eminent scholars. They are of opinion that the present form of the Gospel has been reached after an editing process, and that the last chapter, or Appendix, belongs to the period of final revision and recasting of the Johannine writings. Even if this be so, S. John xxi. contributes external evidence of the first rank and value. It is a ratification of the Gospel and a valuable testimony to its Apostolic authorship by an editor who cannot well be separated by more than thirty years or so from the date of the original composition of S. John.

Who, then, is this Jewish philosophic eye-witness, familiar with Palestine, a disciple of our Lord, writing for non-Jewish readers?

Tradition unanimously replies: S. John the Apostle. Is there anything in the Gospel itself, or in the Johannine writings generally, inconsistent with this traditional view?

Many critics answer: Yes, there is a great deal in the internal evidence which forbids us to ascribe the Fourth Gospel to S. John. Tradition, in this matter, is wrong, for the following reasons amongst others:

(a) John, son of Zebedec, was not a man of sufficient culture to write such a Gospel.

(b) John, the "Son of Thunder," can hardly be the author of this Gospel of Love.

(c) It is inconceivable that the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse can come from the same hand. (*See Appendix*).

These objections look formidable, yet they are not unanswerable. But before we approach them, there is one preliminary question—S. John's residence in Ephesus—which claims our attention. The main point at issue hinges on it to a great extent.

The upholders of the Johannine authorship labour under a great disadvantage. To begin with, the whole burden of proof lies with them. They are compelled to prove that their hypothesis covers *all* the facts, while their critics have merely to point out that it fails to cover satisfactorily *some* of the facts, and it is much easier to point out flaws in a general statement than to establish a principle universally.

But there is more than this. Our knowledge of S. John the Apostle is so slight that we have not sufficient *data* to enable us to rebut the pleas brought forward by the opposite side. The evidence bearing on S. John's later biography that can be brought into court seldom amounts to absolute certainty, only to great probability.

Outside the Gospel-story, very little is known of John, the son of Zebedee. Soon after Pentecost his name disappears entirely from the Acts. What became of him? We are told by ecclesiastical writers that he lived to a very advanced age. Did he

remain in Jerusalem? If so, why is he not mentioned in the Acts after the opening chapters? Did he leave Jerusalem, as tradition asserts, and, after a short interval, take up his residence permanently in Ephesus, one of the centres of Greek culture?

If S. John never left Jerusalem, it becomes all but a moral impossibility for him to have composed the Fourth Gospel, while the Apocalypse is precisely the kind of book we should *a priori* expect him to have written.

On the other hand, if S. John dwelt for any considerable length of time at Ephesus, his residence in that cultured Greek city might fully account for the great development in his character. It would also satisfactorily explain the breadth of mental horizon so apparent in the author of the Fourth Gospel.

We have seen that a Jew is by nature remarkably adaptive. He evolves new and unexpected traits in response to new surroundings. Now a prolonged stay in Ephesus would in itself be a liberal education. Such a sojourn in the broadening light of Greek culture could easily transfigure the son of Zebedee into the S. John of the Fourth Gospel, even as his travels contributed largely to the transfiguration of Saul the bigoted persecutor into S. Paul the most liberal-minded and cosmopolitan of Christians. His conversion alone would never have given S. Paul his width and attractiveness. S. James was a confirmed Christian, yet his Christianity left him bigoted and narrow all his days. Is it a mere freak of fancy

to suppose that it was mainly by reason of the fact of his never leaving Jerusalem after the Ascension that S. James remained so extremely Jewish in his views to his life's end?

True, in our estimate of the character of the Apostles, too much emphasis may easily be laid on the power of environment, and far too little weight attached to the man's own personality or to the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart. Few, however, will be ready to deny that a S. Paul's character was immensely influenced and enlarged by his travels. Living in daily contact with the rich culture of Greek cities, and learning the thoughts of many men, it was impossible for S. Paul to view things from the limited Jewish standpoint of a S. James whose thoughts were full of Jerusalem and Jerusalem alone.

If S. Paul owes so much of his liberal comprehensiveness to his travels, why may not a similar cause produce a similar effect in a son of Zebedee? His prolonged stay in Ephesus would be more than enough to mellow the stern Boanerges into the Apostle of love, even as it was largely his Greek environment that enabled S. Paul to write 1 Cor. xiii., that magnificent Psalm on charity. S. John's residence in Ephesus, again, would also go far to convert the narrow Jewish writer of the Apocalypse into the broad-minded author of the Fourth Gospel.

This is why so much hangs on the answer to the question: Did S. John dwell at Ephesus for any

considerable length of time, or did he not? Even if this question is settled in the affirmative, it by no means rebuts all the arguments on the other side, neither does it establish the Johannine authorship on a foundation that cannot be shaken. On the other hand, unless S. John made a prolonged stay in some centre of Greek culture, he can hardly have written the Gospel traditionally ascribed to him.

Thus, by a kind of tacit consent on both sides, the point at issue is now generally reduced to a very small compass. It resolves itself into the question whether S. John left Jerusalem and resided among Greeks or not.

The upholders of the traditional view rely mainly on the evidence of Irenæus, Polycrates and especially Polycarp, in support of their contention that S. John resided very many years at Ephesus.

Irenæus (180 A.D.) says that John "the disciple of the Lord, which leaned upon Jesus' breast" lived up to the time of Trajan^j (emperor 98—117 A.D.) and published his Gospel in Ephesus^j. He adds that he wrote the Apocalypse under Domitian, towards the end of his reign (emperor 81—96 A.D.). It is generally admitted that Irenæus identifies the "disciple whom Jesus loved" with John the Apostle.

Polycrates (circ. 190 A.D.), Bishop of Ephesus, says that John worked in Ephesus and was buried there. He names among the pillars of the Church who lie buried in Asia Minor, Philip the Apostle (whose virgin-daughters he mentions); John the "witness"

^j H.E. III. 23. 3; Iren. III. i. i (Eus. V. 8. 4).

and "teacher," "the disciple who leaned upon the breast of the Lord," and "was made a priest wearing the sacerdotal plate^k"; also Polycarp, together with many others of lesser note.

From our knowledge of Irenæus and Polycrates, there is only one natural interpretation of which their words are capable. They were personally convinced that John had worked as a minister of the Word at Ephesus. The statement of Polycrates in particular should carry special weight, for he was in a position to speak with a full knowledge of the facts. He was himself Bishop of Ephesus, and 65 years old at the time of giving the evidence just quoted; that is to say, he belonged to the generation immediately succeeding S. John. His memory would hardly play him false after such a short interval.

But we must not overstate our case. We should like above all things to establish the Apostolic authorship of S. John, in which we personally believe. Yet the critic is a truth seeker, and not a special pleader. Strong as the evidence of Irenæus and Polycrates may seem, it is not so convincing as it appears. The advocates on the other side remind us that it really helps us not at all. It only confirms what the direct evidence of the Gospel and its Appendix have already told us respecting the personality of the author of S. John. Polycrates

^k ὃς ἐγενήθη ἱερεὺς τὸ πέταλον πεφορηκώς, καὶ μάρτυς καὶ διδάσκαλος (Eus. V. 24. 3. cf. III. 31. 3). Some translate it: 'who was high-priest and wore the plate of gold' (i.e. mitre), e.g. Godet and Von Soden. It implies this.

and Irenæus both speak of him in the Gospel's own language as "the disciple of the Lord, which leaned on His Breast." What is passing strange is that Polycrates, in his description of him, adds many other titles, e.g., "witness" (this is also from the Gospel), "teacher," "high-priest wearing the mitre," but not a word is ever said of his greatest title of all, "Apostle."

Apart from this, say these critics and not without reason, the testimony of late writers of the second century must be received with extreme caution in any question bearing on the Apostolic authorship of our Gospels. We have seen over and over again how very eager these ecclesiastical writers are to seize upon any piece of evidence, however weak, pointing in that direction. These Fathers confidently assure us that our S. Matthew is by the *Apostle* Matthew, and that S. Peter dictated S. Mark's Gospel and ratified it. Polycrates himself, in his statement about S. John, also speaks of the *Apostle* Philip and his virgin-daughters, whereas we only know of the virgin-daughters of Philip the *Evangelist*.

Therefore they maintain that all the evidence of Polycrates and Irenæus really proves amounts to this. There was a current ecclesiastical tradition at Ephesus that John, "the disciple of the Lord," a "witness," "teacher" and "mitred priest¹," the man who had written the Gospel and Apocalypse, lived and died at Ephesus. Papias, in 140—150

¹ This is evidently a legendary trait and considerably weakens Polycrates' evidence.

A.D., had told us practically the same facts forty years before of "*John the Elder*."

Polycarp. Let us now turn to Polycarp's evidence. He was Bishop of Smyrna, near Ephesus, and died about 155 A.D., at the age of 86; that is to say, he was born about 70 A.D. Polycarp is rightly called an Apostolic Father. How great was his reputation is best shown by the fury of the heathen and the Jews in his martyrdom. He was arrested amid shouts of "This is the teacher of Asia; this is the father of Christians; this is the destroyer of our gods." His Epistle to the Church of Philippi shows us how fully his apostolic spirit, his wisdom and justice, must have been recognized even in Macedonia. Even the Church at Rome specially honoured and revered this venerable apostolic Father.

Polycarp's evidence will therefore be of priceless worth if it is material to the point at issue. We are indebted to Irenæus for our information, so we only have it at second-hand.

This is what Irenæus writes in a letter addressed to Florinus:—

"I saw you, when I was yet as a boy in Asia Minor, with Polycarp. . . . I could even now point out the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and spoke, and describe his going out and his coming in, his manner of life, his personal appearance, the addresses he delivered to the multitude, *how he spoke of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord*, and how he recalled their words. And everything that he had heard from them about the Lord, about His miracles and His teaching, Polycarp told us, as one who had received it from those who had seen the Word of Life with their own eyes, and all this in complete harmony with the Scriptures. To

this I then listened, through the mercy of God vouchsafed to me, with all eagerness, and wrote it not on paper but in my heart, and still by the grace of God I ever bring it into fresh remembrance."

Again, in a letter to Victor, Bishop of Rome, Irenæus speaks of Polycarp as following the example of "John, the disciple of the Lord, and the rest of the Apostles with whom he associated."

In the passage first quoted, Irenæus is at great pains to impress upon his readers the deep, vivid, personal impression Polycarp made on him; how eagerly he treasured every word that fell from his master's lips, and observed his every gesture and action. It is difficult to know what words would convey the suggestion that Irenæus distinctly heard Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna near Ephesus, say that he had companied with S. John, if these words do not. The second passage: "Polycarp followed the example of John, the disciple of the Lord, and the rest of the Apostles with whom he associated," seems to set the matter beyond the possibility of a doubt. Here S. John is evidently identified with the Twelve, though the title adopted by the Evangelist, "disciple of the Lord," is naturally still retained.

But, here again, a very strong case is made out by the other side, rebutting most of this evidence. We may analyse their counter plea somewhat as follows:—

(1) *Residence at Ephesus.* What is there, they ask, in Polycarp's testimony to prove that he supports the

theory of S. John's residence in Ephesus? All that Irenæus, as a boy, heard Polycarp say was that he was personally acquainted with "John and with others who had seen the Lord." This does not prove John's residence in Asia Minor any more than it establishes S. Peter's or S. James' stay there, or that of any of the others who had seen the Lord. Are we to suppose that Polycarp never left Smyrna? We know he went to Rome, why not to Palestine?

(2) *Identity of John.* Polycarp met John. Which John? Papias assures us that a "John the Elder" undoubtedly lived near Ephesus. He was a "disciple of the Lord" and highly esteemed, or Papias would not have mentioned him in the same breath and on the same level as the Twelve.

(3) *Veracity of Irenæus.* Irenæus himself tells us he was a mere boy when he heard Polycarp. There is not a particle of evidence to show that Irenæus stood in any other relationship to Polycarp than that of a very youthful hearer listening to his sermon like any other member of a mixed congregation, and at a very impressionable age. Zealous overmuch, Irenæus read more into Polycarp's words than they actually meant. He himself personally identified John, the disciple of the Lord, with S. John the Apostle, but it by no means follows that, when Polycarp spoke of "John and others who had seen the Lord," he referred to the Apostle John. We know how easily the wish is father to the thought. Irenæus was persuaded in his own mind that

Polycarp's "John" was the John whom he himself identified with the author of the Fourth Gospel, and he consistently adhered to this mistaken opinion all his life.

This is not mere conjecture. Irenæus, in another place, expressly tells us that Papias was a hearer of the Apostle John. Eusebius, with the book of Papias open before him, plainly refutes Irenæus and proves that Irenæus has confused John the Apostle with John the Elder.

(4) *Silence of Ignatius.* There is an even stronger argument still. Ignatius, an Apostolic Father, writing to the Ephesians in the year 115 A.D., makes not the slightest allusion to S. John's residence in Ephesus, but calls the Ephesians comrades in faith of S. Paul^m. This is inconceivable if S. John the Apostle was head of the Ephesian Church for many years. Clement of Rome, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, naturally reminds the Corinthian Church of the words which their own Apostle S. Paul had spoken unto them. We are, then, not a little surprised to find in Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians no hint, no reference whatever to their own Apostle S. John, if it be true that the son of Zebedee ever ministered amongst them.

We have here endeavoured to state the whole case as fairly, strongly and candidly as even adverse critics could wish. We must leave it to our readers

^m "For Ignatius and Polycarp, *Paul*, not John, is still the Apostle of Asia." (Bacon.)

to draw their own inferences. The evidence is of a nature which does not admit of dogmatism, and the question is not likely to be settled beyond possibility of dispute till new *data* throw fresh and stronger light on the subject. At the same time, if the point be conceded that the author is "the disciple whom Jesus loved," still more if he is "the disciple whom Jesus loved, which leaned upon His Breast at supper," it seems to require some ingenuity and special pleading to identify him with "John the Elder" and not with the Apostle John whom the words instinctively and naturally suggest.

We have little more to add. The preceding pages contain practically all we have to say in answer to the objections of those who reject the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel on the plea that the son of Zebedee had neither the learning nor the temperament of its author. We may, however, be allowed to add a supplementary note on each of these points.

(a) *Learning.* John was of a higher social position than the other Apostles. His father Zebedee (S. Mark i. 20) employed hired servants. The request of his mother that her two sons should have precedence in Messiah's Kingdom also seems to imply that she considered their social position gave them that right. John would therefore be better instructed than the other disciples. He was a disciple of the Baptist's even before he joined Jesus. We know that he was

with our Lord from the very outset of His Ministry, and one of the select Three. To a man of John's insight, this was more than a liberal education in itself.

True, the members of the Sanhedrin perceived that Peter and John "were unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts iv. 13). But we have already seen (p. 98) that a man might have perfect knowledge of the Scriptures, yet if he had not been "a pupil of the wise" (i.e. scribes or Rabbis), he was looked upon as an ignoramus. "This people, who knoweth not the Law, are cursed" (John vii. 49).

Thus the words of the Jewish rulers mean nothing more than that John had never attended the lectures of the scribes or been instructed in their cumbrous system of scholastic pedantry. This does not cast the slightest reflection on his intellectual capacity, perhaps rather the reverse.

(b) *Temperament*ⁿ. The "sons of Zebedee," Bo-

ⁿ If the "other disciple" of the Fourth Gospel is the John of the Synoptists, we see him at once reserved yet ambitious, tender yet passionate. In "S. John," he only speaks thrice: "Master, where dwellest Thou?" (or does Andrew say this?) (i. 38.) "Lord, who is it?" (xiii. 25.) "It is the Lord" (xxi. 7). In the Synoptists, he wishes to call down fire on those who welcome not his Master (Luke ix. 54); he forbids a man to work miracles in Christ's Name, because he has not openly joined his Master (Luke ix. 49); he himself wants to be nearest his Master's Person in His Kingdom (Mark x. 37). Yet this strange blend is all the outcome of devoted enthusiasm. He is intensely jealous for his Master's honour. John's motto was: "All or nothing: a whole-hearted following of Christ or none at all." *Trop de zèle* was the source of his intolerance and ambition (Luke ix. 49; Mark x. 37). Hence it is that our Lord selects John as one

nerges, "sons of Thunder," are certainly represented in the Synoptic Gospels as strong natures, full of zeal and jealous for the honour of our Lord, now and again apt to allow their pent-up feelings to burst forth like the sudden eruption of a volcano. But the strongest natures are precisely those which are a blend of passionate vehemence and loving gentleness, only it requires time and care to develope such a character, and it is often an open question which of the two traits will gain the mastery. Such men become either great saints or great sinners. No doubt S. John had much to learn and to unlearn, but he was in the best of schools under the best of Masters.

Besides, S. John, up to the end of his days, was never the absolutely placid, weakly mild, almost effeminate character he is commonly pictured. There was ever a strong dash of sternness in his temperament, an uncompromising hatred of all that is evil or untrue. The youth with whom Italian art has made us familiar,—the youth of unearthly beauty, "with features of almost feminine softness, with the long bright locks streaming down his neck and a perfectly smooth face," is neither the John of the Apocalypse and the Synoptists, nor of the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles.

of the Three, though he checks his exaggerated zeal. Timid, tender, ardent by nature, John's was one of those temperaments (to his life's end) whose profound pent-up emotions are liable to unexpected momentary eruptions.

There is a tone of severity running all through the Johannine writings as well as a spirit of intense Love, a 'severity even more intense than that of S. James. "He that doeth sin is of the Devil" (1 John iii. 8 R.V.) "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie" (1 John i. 6). "If any one come to you and bring not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting" (2 John 10. R.V.). "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. He is Antichrist" (1 John ii. 22 ; cf. 2 John 7).

The Boanerges element is in S. John still, but it is transfigured and purified into that righteous hatred of all that offends against Divine Love. He is stern but only with the sternness of His Master Christ, and such sternness must ever be a note of all true and strong manhood.

Note.

S. John's style is simple and apparently poor, yet very deep and rich.
Vocabulary. (1) Its apparent monotony, e.g. the words *Light, Life,*

Word, glory, truth, darkness, grace, world, to testify, to know, to believe, recur over and over again, yet their intrinsic richness and unfathomable depth more than atone for their repetition.

- (2) The same remark holds good of S. John's pet particles : *and* (καί), *now* (δέ), *as* (ὥς), *then* (οὖν), *in order that* (ἵνα).

Syntax.

Simple sentences are placed side by side, co-ordinated and not subordinated. Often conjunctions are dispensed with altogether, or only the simplest particles are used (e.g. viii. 23, i. 1—5).

Parallelisms.

e.g. viii. 23 : "Ye are from beneath, I am from above ; ye are of this world, I am not of this world."

Symbolism. e.g. *to hunger, to thirst*, used spiritually.

Repetition. A key-word is taken up again and again in the same passage; the leading thought, meanwhile, constantly advancing and gaining in weight, like a snow-ball (e.g. Chapters x., xvii.).

Hebraisms. There are no Aramaisms proper in S. John, but all the above instances prove that the whole Gospel is cast in a Hebrew mould. Indeed, S. John's style is the best possible proof of its Jewish authorship. The Greek of this Gospel may be pure, but as Luthardt well puts it: *it is a Hebrew soul in a Greek body*^o.

^o (See Appendix, "*Apocalypse of S. John*," for a fuller discussion of S. John's style, and the pronounced family-likeness existing between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse).

PART IV.

PALESTINE IN OUR LORD'S DAY.

- (1) Judaism and Jewish parties, from the modern historical standpoint. (Chap. XXV.)
- (2) Palestine: its political geography, customs and institutions. (Chap. XXVI.)

CHAPTER XXV.

JEWISH PARTIES IN OUR LORD'S DAY.

JEWES of the present day often complain, and not without reason, that we do their ancestors less than justice. We are too easily content to see the Jews of our Lord's time through His disciples' eyes, and the portrait we form is out of proportion. It is a fairly true picture, but it wants some toning down of light and shade.

If we would intelligently read our Gospels, and judge Christ and Jews alike from the right standpoint, we must reconstruct the whole contemporary background of the Palestine of 30 A.D. Thus only can our Western minds, 1900 years after the events, correctly view the whole scene in its original Eastern setting, as it actually appeared to the spectators.

We must see the tragedy and its chief actors through Jewish eyes, or we shall not be fair to the Jews. We are too apt to sum up our verdict of Pharisees, Sadducees and other Jewish sects in a pregnant epigram. It is not enough to dismiss the Pharisees in two words as canting hypocrites, or to think that we have said all when we speak of the worldly ambition of the Sadducees, the pedantry of

the Scribes, the rough stern rule of the Romans, the fickleness of the crowd.

A few such strong colours do paint a picture, but the colours do not blend as they should. The values are wrong and the result is a totally false impression, a distorted interpretation of the facts.

Our aim in this chapter is to sketch in broad outline the secular conditions under which the Life portrayed in the Gospels was lived, the state of parties in our Lord's day, the elements that favoured His mission, the antagonistic factors which acted as a foil.

The Pharisees and Sadducees are naturally the first to claim our attention. We know that the Sadducees consisted of aristocratic families who favoured Greek culture, while the Pharisees were Hebrews of the Hebrews who loathed and despised all foreign ways, looking upon Gentiles as enemies of God. But this general statement loses half its meaning for the educated reader till he sees its *raison d'être*, and we cannot trace the distinctive characteristics of these two Jewish parties to their true source without passing in rapid review the political history of the Jews during the two or three centuries before Christ's Advent.

The Old Testament history (e.g. Esther) brings us down to the days of the Persian yoke. When the Persian Empire was broken up by Alexander the Great (333 B.C.), Palestine passed under Greek rule. At his death, Alexander's Empire was divided into

an Egyptian and a Syrian monarchy, with Palestine as a buffer-state between the two. The Holy Land at the outset fell to the share of the Egyptian Ptolemies, but, about 200 B.C., Syria succeeded in wresting Palestine from Egypt.

The Jews sided with Syria against Egypt. It soon became clear to them that they had made a poor bargain by the exchange. Taxes were doubled. Worst of all, the new government encouraged immigration into Palestine, while Greek civilization was forced upon the newly-conquered nation. Greek cities sprang up all over Palestine, except in Judæa, where the purer Jews resisted Greek influence and settlements, and closed the gates of Jerusalem against foreigners.

At last a Syrian King arose who determined to Europeanize even Jerusalem. Greek rulers, like our own Government, were remarkably tolerant of other people's prejudices, and invariably respected the religion of their subjects. An oracle of Delphi had well expressed Greek ideas on this point when it said that the proper religion for each man was the faith of his fathers.

On the other hand, Greeks would not, any more than ourselves, allow their subjects' religious prejudices to interfere with their civil duties, nor to stand in the way of the expansion of the Greek empire or the spread of its civilization. Therefore, when Jerusalem closed its gates against all Greek trade, Antiochus Epiphanes (175—164 B.C.) resolved to

remove this boycott and had recourse to severe measures. He determined to force European civilization upon the Holy City itself. The peculiar religion of the Jews and their Mosaic law were at the root of their obstinate exclusiveness. They must go. He therefore promulgated a decree throughout his whole Syrian kingdom that "in religion, law and custom all should be one people."

Antiochus Epiphanes was an enlightened ruler, and not so black as he is painted. But he was moved to take this unwise step by two considerations: (1) Jewish exclusiveness closed Palestine to foreign trade, and this could not be tolerated. (2) In Jerusalem itself, there was a strong Greek party among the Jews who misled him.

The Greek party arose in this way. The Syrian overlord retained in his own hands the appointment to the chief and most lucrative Jewish posts. He had much to say even in the matter of the high-priesthood. Now, personal advancement was a potent factor among the priestly nobility and aristocratic families in Jerusalem. These "opportunists" vied with each other in their attempts to curry favour with the Syrian king. Little by little, Greek manners and customs gained entrance into Jerusalem itself. The upper and cultivated classes of Jewish society began to feel ashamed of their Jewish singularity in the presence of refined Greeks at home and abroad, and did all in their power to conceal it.

This Greek party misled Antiochus Epiphanes into believing that, with a little forcible persuasion, all Palestine was ready to accept Greek civilization, even the Greek language and religion. With his heart set on his pet scheme of knitting the various peoples of his kingdom into a compact whole, Antiochus was ready to believe them. In this way, he was drawn into extreme measures of religious persecution which he afterwards bitterly regretted, but which have gained him the reputation of a Nero. Sabbath-observance, circumcision, and abstinence from pork were forbidden under penalty of death. The possession of a copy of the Law was also made a capital offence. He set up a pagan altar to Zeus in the Holy of Holies, and pigs were sacrificed upon it! All circumcised children were hurled headlong from the walls with their mothers, and any who refused to eat pork were put to death, while Bibles were burnt wholesale.

Antiochus had overshot his mark. From the first there had been riots here and there. A day came when the Jews no longer raised riots, they rebelled. No sooner had Antiochus set up the *abomination of desolation* in the Temple than an invincible spirit of religious patriotism was evoked, and under the gallant Maccabees the independence of Judæa was achieved.

A grateful nation made the Maccabees "leaders, high-priests and governors," and these offices were to be hereditary in their family. These rulers are

known as the Hasmonean dynasty, which lasted about 100 years (circ. 160—60 B.C.).

The Jews are at their best only in times of adversity. As soon as they obtained Home Rule, they abused their privilege. One would have thought that the Greek, or Hellenizing party, would have received its death-blow with the fall of its patron, Antiochus Epiphanes. Far from it. The Hasmoneans aimed at conquest and aped the royal splendour of kings around them. They copied the Greek manners of their powerful neighbours, and patronized the priestly aristocracy, or Hellenist section, with whom they had much more in common than with the Hebrews of the Hebrews who had gained them their proud position. The Hasmonean family was soon torn with feuds from within, while their worldly foreign policy estranged the "pious" and the nation generally.

A civil war broke out. Both sides appealed to Rome, and the Roman senate placed Herod the Great, an Idumaean prince, upon the throne. The entire influence of these Herodian usurpers was cast on the side of Hellenism. Herod the Great rebuilt the Temple. Even into the Temple Greek architecture found its way. He placed above its gates a golden eagle in honour of the Romans. He also built a theatre, amphitheatre and hippodrome, for Greek plays and heathen games, in or near Jerusalem, and a theatre at Cæsarea, which he made his head-quarters.

On his death, Augustus divided Palestine between Herod's three sons, but greatly restricted their power. Archelaus, governor of Judæa, after nine years of misrule, was removed and banished to Vienne. From this time to 41 A.D. Judæa was made a dependency of Syria, and placed under a procurator. These procurators were high Roman officials, like our lieutenant-governors, who were appointed to maintain order and collect the revenues; for the Jews had to pay tribute, of course, to the Romans. This was so galling to a nation which only recognized God as their King, that the very tax-gatherers were looked upon as unclean creatures. No self-respecting Jew would eat with them or pray with them.

We have dwelt at considerable length on these dry historical details because it makes it so much more easy to give an intelligible account of the Sadducees, Pharisees, Herodians, and Jewish parties generally in our Lord's day.

The *Pharisees* were the strictest sect of the Hebrews, an offshoot of that intensely patriotic and ultra-conservative party which, under Judas Maccabæus, waged a truceless and successful war against Hellenism. The preservation of Judaism in its narrowest exclusiveness was their programme. The strict Pharisee considered it a sin to live abroad, or to speak a foreign language. Pharisees regarded all Gentiles as outside the pale of God's Kingdom, and, in their eyes, those of their own nation who Hellenized were as guilty as the Jews of old who

"sat down to eat and drink, and rose to play" around the golden calf. The literature of the Gentiles was *taboo*. When an old Rabbi was asked at what hour Greek literature might be studied, he replied that it could only be studied at an hour which belonged neither to the day nor to the night, for Scripture saith that God's Law is to be a Jew's meditation night and day (Ps. i. 2).

The intolerance and aloofness of the Pharisees were extreme. Their own religion was wholly true the religions of others wholly false. They believed themselves to be in everlasting league with the Creator of the Universe, Who had elected the Jews as His Chosen People, and made them a peculiar people, a nation of priests and holy men (Deut. xiv. 2). It was for their sake that God raised and humbled other nations. Babylon, Persia, Syria had triumphed awhile, because God used them as a rod wherewith to chastise and discipline His people for their sins. Babylon, Persia and Syria had fallen as soon as they had served the Jewish purpose for which they were called into existence. Rome was God's rod now, but merely for a short season. In its turn, this rod would be broken as soon as it had done its work of educating the Jews. Then Messiah would come, the Kingdom of David would be restored, and Jerusalem would become the headquarters of God on earth. All Gentiles should be subject unto the Jews, and Gentile Kings should minister unto them. Was it not for Jews that

God had made the sea dry land, rained manna from heaven, stayed the Sun and Moon? Was it not for them that prophets had revealed the oracles and whole counsel of God? Salvation was of the Jews, and of the Jews alone.

No wonder that such men are represented by our Lord as "thanking God that they are not as other men are."

Christ, a Jew, coming to His own people whom He so dearly loved as their Saviour and Reformer might say that of the Pharisees,—not we. Of every Christian Church it may be said: *mutato nomine de te fabula narratur*. Bigoted and narrow as we may call the Pharisees, they had excellent redeeming features. They had a most implicit faith in God, and were zealots in patriotism. The voice of the people is often the voice of God, and the Pharisees were beloved of the masses. The Jews as a nation admired their inflexible orthodoxy, and sympathized with their national exclusiveness, their exaltation of God with Israel as His people, Jerusalem His City, and Moses His Prophet.

There is no denying that the Pharisaic religionism of the time of our Lord sadly needed reforming. Otherwise Christ would not have spoken as He did in the Sermon on the Mount, neither would He so uncompromisingly denounce the official leaders of Judaism as "Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." Over and over again does our Lord tell these teachers of Israel that their whole life and

creed are a hollow sham, radically wrong, and hateful to God. Their motto was: "so much keeping of the Law, so much merit." In their pride of race, they boasted "we are children of Abraham." Christ admits neither of these claims. He tells them in so many words: the mere keeping of the Law will profit you not at all. What God demands is a right life, not mere orthodoxy, correct services, or costly sacrifices. Do you think God will overlook your shortcomings simply because you are His children? Precisely because you are His chosen people, *therefore* will He visit your sins upon you all the more, for "to whom much is given, of him is much required."

All this is more than true, yet let us be fair to these Pharisees. They had faults in plenty, but two virtues, at least, they certainly possessed—intense patriotism, and an equally intense belief in God. If we condemn the Pharisee's pride of race, we must also denounce our own, yet we rightly call it almost a virtue. We do not wish to suggest for one moment that the Puritans—whom Carlyle rightly calls: "the last of all our heroes, the last glimpse of God vanishing from this England"—were Pharisees at heart, or in religion and character, but Pharisees and Puritans alike had one divine virtue none too common now. Diametrically opposed as are the two in reality, they had one feature in common—over and above their long prayers, austere looks, love of Scripture texts, upturned eyes, and gloomy Sabbatarianism—an unshaken and

unshakable faith in God. To quote Carlyle once more, the Pharisee world, like the Puritans', was "a practical world based on Belief in God ; a Reign of God ; very great, very glorious ; now giving place to the Reign of the No-God, whom men name Devil. A very stupendous phenomenon, tragical enough to all thinking hearts that look on it from these days of ours."

We hold no brief for the Pharisees, but do let us remember that they are not limited to one period, one nation, one church, and that, here as elsewhere, "all Scripture is written for our learning." Hypocrites there were among them by the score, but it was the outcome of exaggerated zeal. The excellent aims and intentions with which they originally started had in course of time degenerated into a hollow, formal, dead routine. The Jews returned from their captivity imbued with an intense zeal for God and reverence for His Law. It was because they carried this zeal too far and were "righteous overmuch," "making a fence about the Law" in trivial details, that they eventually became so puritanical and rigid in their observance of the Mosaic Law. What was a virtue at the outset degenerated, through exaggeration, into a vice. Animated, at the start, by a living inspiring loyalty and heart-felt devotion to God and His Will, little by little the Pharisaic attitude became more and more hardened into a cold theological creed, clothed in a web of minute ceremonial formalities, till the life all but

went out of it. They overlaid the Law of Moses with endless traditions of their own so as to keep it better, and kept aloof—as their name implies—even from orthodox Jews who were not equally strict as to foods and cleansings. They strained the water they drank lest they should swallow the forbidden gnat. They wore broad phylacteries and gave alms so as to be seen of men. But, to the end, their “Belief in God” was intense.

On entering their order, a candidate had to take two vows in the presence of three witnesses. One bound him to tithe everything he ate, bought or sold; the other, not to be the guest of the “am-haarets,” or people of the land, who did not know and keep the law oral and written. They regarded themselves as the saints, the true Israel. The others were the ungodly, for “the people which know not the law are accursed,” said they.

Politically, they disliked Roman rule and bitterly resented the paying of tribute to pagan Gentiles, but they submitted to it. It was a rod for their sins. In the fulness of time God would restore the kingdom to His people. This would come to pass not by man's agency, but by the direct interposition of God Himself. Messiah, David's Son, would be God's Viceroy on earth, and the Law of Moses would be the rule of the Divine Kingdom.

In their religious views, the Pharisees believed in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and in rewards and punishments after death.

They also believed in angels and spirits, both good and bad. Their faith in Divine Providence was so pronounced that it almost bordered on fatalism and a denial of man's free-will.

The Pharisees formed by far the most powerful and popular party in the Jewish state. The people respected them for their intense patriotism and inflexible orthodoxy. Hence, although they were socially and intellectually inferior to the Sadducees, their influence was infinitely greater.

The *Sadducees* stood at the opposite pole to the Pharisees, in almost every respect. They were the descendants of the priestly nobility who had belonged to the Greek party in Antiochus' day. Aristocrats by birth, and essentially men of the world, they were ever born diplomats and strangely lukewarm in religion. Politics was their true sphere. Typical opportunists, they espoused the cause of their Syrian overlords, and of the ambitious Hasmoneans who succeeded them, because such a policy was admirably calculated to advance their own interests and personal comfort.

With the fall of the Maccabees, their day of power waned. Herod never forgave them for siding against him. Forty-five of their number he put to death, but he did not stop there. Hitherto the higher ranks of the priesthood had been confined to a closed circle of aristocratic families. It was also from these families alone that the Sadducees' ranks were recruited. Herod changed all this. He flooded the

higher priestly ranks with persons of obscure birth, thus replacing the old aristocracy with creatures of his own. Not content with this, his masterly stroke of diplomatic policy was to abolish the life-tenure of the high-priest's office.

In this way, the Sadducees were relegated to comparative insignificance. They were driven out of the sphere of politics, in which they were thoroughly at home, into the region of religion and theological discussions for which they cared far less.

Secondary as religion was to the Sadducees, they had distinct religious tenets of their own. Liberals and progressives in politics, they were ardent conservatives where Scripture was concerned. They were, in fact, strict-Bible Jews. They would accept nothing that could not be shown them in the Old Testament, and especially in the Books of Moses. Therefore they rejected the traditions of the elders altogether. They likewise refused to believe in angels or in the resurrection of the dead, because there was nothing written about either in the Mosaic Books.

Their moral and intellectual views were cold, but enlightened, and reflected their common-sense and worldly-wisdom. As their creed debarred them from a belief in future rewards and punishments, they taught that men should be virtuous without the fear of punishment or the hope of reward, and that such virtue alone is of any worth.

They repudiated the fatalism of the Pharisees,

maintaining that man is, under God, master of his own fortunes and absolutely free to choose this course or that, good or bad, at his will.

Consistently with this view, they laughed to scorn the Pharisaic idea that the Kingdom was to be restored to Israel by the direct and miraculous interposition of God Himself. Far from expecting anything of the kind, the Sadducees insisted that, if this Kingdom was ever to come, the Jews must establish it for themselves by human wisdom and human hands. God would only help them if they helped themselves. Personally, they did not place much faith in this Messiah-Kingdom. They were too sober, practical, matter-of-fact statesmen to entertain wild hopes of a brilliant political future for Palestine.

As may be expected, their influence with the people was very small. The Sadducees despised the vulgar herd, and Jews were not likely to feel much respect for the extremely secular views of these rich, indolent aristocrats with their indifference to religion. Indeed, it was their essentially worldly spirit against which Christ warned His followers when He said "Beware of the leaven of the Sadducees."

They seem to have ignored our Lord during the first part of His ministry. Like Gallio, they cared for none of these things so long as Christ confined Himself to purely religious questions. But they resented His cleansing of the Temple as an impertinent interference with the prerogatives of the

Sanhedrin. They also looked with displeasure on His claim to be Messiah, the Son of David, because they foresaw that a Messianic movement might involve grave political consequences.

The *Scribes* were the Jewish "men of letters" (*γραμματεῖς*). In Ezra's day, their function was to copy, edit, study and interpret the Scriptures, and especially the Mosaic Law. Ere long, they were the only officially recognized religious teachers. Their chief men had a seat in the Sanhedrin, acted as Judges, and were the real leaders of Israel.

Their motto was: Be cautious in judging, train many scholars, and set a fence about the law. And a fence about the law they did set with a vengeance.

To a pious Jew of our Lord's day, the Law of Moses was a perfect revelation of God's Will. In it He had made known the perfect way of life, so that whoever walked before God according to its rules would be richly blessed both here and hereafter. Therefore a pious Jew was painfully eager punctiliously to obey the Law (see pp. 28 sqq.).

But it was impossible for an average man to do this without special guidance. The Law of Moses had been written hundreds of years before our Lord's day. Times and circumstances had entirely changed since then, while the law had remained the same. How were new cases, or difficulties which Moses had never contemplated, to be met? Not a word had

the Law to say on just those points where a Jew of 30 A.D. most wanted enlightenment.

We know how Christ solved this problem : Fulfil the Law by probing down to its underlying spirit, and act on that. Not so, said the Scribes. Within the four walls of the Mosaic Law there is, explicitly or implicitly, a positive rule which will meet every possible case imaginable. This rule must be obeyed to the very letter. To go outside the letter of the Law for guidance is a mortal sin.

With a hair-splitting ingenuity which the most pronounced Jesuit casuists might envy, they busied themselves in applying the Mosaic Law so as to meet beforehand all conceivable contingencies that could ever arise. Every one of their decisions was treasured. It was "one of the words of the wise." To run counter to it was sin, a crime worthy of death. It was a common saying among pious Jews : an offence against one of the sayings of the Scribes is worse than an offence against the words of Scripture ; for "their words are as wine, while the Law is as water."

In course of time, as may be expected, the accumulation of these "decisions" of the wise grew to enormous dimensions. Now, as the tradition of these Elders was revered above Scripture, it practically made the Word of God of none effect. The cases brought up for their decision became more and more delicate and intricate, their solutions more and more subtle and hair-splitting. Step by step the Scribes

were led to conclusions at which the earlier representatives of their order would have stared aghast. They devised the most ingenious means of evading the plainest duties of the moral Law while still adhering to its letter (e.g. S. Mark vii. 10 sqq.). As a natural consequence of this holy quibbling, conscience was blunted. The blight of indifference and hypocrisy fell upon morality and religion, till piety was reduced to an external and mechanical formalism.

We shall see that there were splendid exceptions. Even here there is a bright as well as a dark side to the picture.

Like Ezra himself, the Scribes were originally found among the priests and Levites; later they became an independent order, open to all. It was a Rabbinical axiom that "the crown of the kingdom is deposited in Judah, the crown of the priesthood is in the seed of Aaron, but the crown of the Law is open to all Israel." It needed a life-long study to become a scribe, but scribes who gained distinction as expounders of the law had freely accorded to them all the power and honour which they claimed as their right. They claimed and obtained first rank everywhere, while their influence over the people was supreme.

In the Gospels, they are called "scribes," "lawyers," "doctors of the law" or "teachers of the law." They were usually addressed as Rabbis.

The Zealots were an offshoot of the Pharisees. In

modern phrase, the Sadducees were the Cavaliers, the Pharisees the Puritans or Roundheads, and the Zealots the Ironsides of Judaism. The majority of the Pharisees stood aloof from politics. They devoted themselves to the cultivation of their moral and religious influence with the people. Yet they contributed in no small degree to the terrible war which destroyed Jerusalem and the nation about 70 A.D. It was in this way. We have seen that they regarded Roman or any foreign yoke as a necessary evil and a discipline for the nation's sins. One only was their King, God. In their heart of hearts, they bitterly resented Roman rule and Roman taxes. The "tribute-money" was gall and wormwood to them. It implied that Cæsar was their King, and not God.

In the hearts of some of their followers, this idea (Matth. xxii. 17), was quite enough to fan the spark always dormant in patriotic breasts into a flame. Up sprang a new sect, the Zealots. They were rabid nationalists, who regarded it as a duty both to their faith and their fatherland to shake off the Roman yoke. It was the stumbling-block in the way of the fulfilment of Messianic hope, and by the sword must it be removed. Zealotism was in fact a revival of the Maccabean movement.

Their founder was Judas the Galilean (A.D. 6 or 7) who headed a popular revolt "in the days of the taxing when Cyrenius was governor of Syria" (S. Luke ii. 2, cf. Acts v. 36, 37). As a rule, they carried on a clever guerilla warfare, but gradually

degenerated into Sicarii "murderers". Galilee was the home of the party.

Josephus writes of them : " These men agree in all things with the Pharisees ; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty, and say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord."

They are also called " Cananeans", (wrongly Canaanites), a late Hebrew word meaning " jealous " or " zealot." One of our Lord's disciples was a Zealot.

The Herodians were rather a political than a religious party. They were Jews who looked upon the Idumæan Herods as of Jewish descent. Therefore, they had an idea that the Herods were to be the human means in God's hands for the restoration of the kingdom to the Jews. Thus it is not strictly correct to say they were friends of Rome ; neither did they share the general Messianic expectation of a Kingdom of God on earth, with Jerusalem as His head-quarters. But they did hope that Israel would again become a great nation, of Jews and for Jews, under one or other of the sons of Herod. They united with the Pharisees in the attempt to entrap Jesus over the question of paying tribute to Cæsar, not because they had any sympathy with Pharisaic views, but because our Lord's Messianic claims clashed with their own ideas.

The Essenes are not mentioned by name in the Gospels, yet they were a large (4,000) and highly-respected Jewish sect, eminently pious and strict,

living an extremely simple life, and confining their industry solely to agricultural pursuits. They dwelt in separate communities of their own, had all goods in common, and were most temperate in all things. Levitical purity was so sacred in their eyes that they passed much of their time in water and their idea of cleanliness developed into a mania. They carried their dread of impurity so far that they would not taste food cooked, or touch implements or clothes made, by any outside their own sect. They shunned all contact with others as if they were infected with the plague. Celibacy was the rule of their order; therefore they had constantly to recruit their ranks by adopting children whom they carefully trained in their ways. Their observance of the Sabbath was so strict, that not even the most common necessities could be done on that day. It was wholly devoted to religious exercises.

But it would be a gross libel to brand them merely as ascetic fanatics. They were the first people in the world to denounce slavery and war both in theory and practice. They practised "moderation in all things" to such perfection that not only were they most temperate in their food and drink, but they considered all loudness bad taste, even in speech and certainly in dress. Noise or confusion was unknown in their settlements. None wished to be above other, neither did any desire to usurp more than his share of anything, even conversation.

The only two things in which there was any spirit

of emulation amongst them were brotherly kindness and deeds of mercy. They daily, hourly practised that charity which others only admire, and instantly relieved and comforted all and any to whom they could lend a helping hand.

Oaths were strictly forbidden. Their word was their bond. The rules of their order were very simple : to revere God and be just to all men ; to hurt no man willingly by word or deed ; to be temperate in all things, the guardians of good faith and the ministers of peace ; to cherish the truth and unmask liars ; to subordinate self to the common weal, and to transmit their creed unchanged.

Such a virtuous life carried with it its own reward. They were intensely respected and trusted, lived in peace and happiness, knew not the meaning of pain or fear, and their days were long in the land. In their temperance, justice, humanity and spiritual-mindedness they represent the moral ideal of antiquity.

They held many views in common with the Jews, but did not share their belief in a Resurrection *of the body*. They taught that "the body is corruptible, but the soul is immortal and rejoices when released from the bondage of the flesh." They paid special reverence to Moses and his Law, but would not sacrifice in the Temple, though they sent gifts to it.

The strangest thing about their creed is that they paid great reverence to the Sun ; some even say they worshipped it. Their beliefs certainly show

signs of contact with the philosophy both of Greece and Persia.

From the nature of their creed and character, the Essenes are not found in the ranks of our Lord's opponents. They would have much in common with Him. At any rate, we never hear of them directly in the Gospels.

We can thus see that there is a bright as well as a dark side to the picture of the Jews of our Lord's day. There were many Pharisees who led pure and gentle lives, who loved and served God from their inmost heart: men to whom "do unto others as you would that they should do unto you" (a Rabbinic adage), was not merely the language of the lips^a. Unlovely as is our picture of the Scribes, there were members of their order of whom Christ could say and did say, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God" (S. Mark xii. 34), even as there were "rulers" whom Jesus, beholding, loved (S. Mark x. 21=S. Luke xviii. 18).

So with the Mosaic Law. It is all very well for us to say that the Law, in the hands of the scribes, became hardened into a Priestly Code, a cold, lifeless, theological creed. But we should not be blind to its virtues. Our Lord Himself tells us it was admirably

^a We are told that Hillel one day replied to a man, who asked if he could teach him the whole Torah (Law) while he stood on one leg: "What is hateful to thyself do not to thy fellow; this is the whole Torah, and the rest is commentary."

suited to its day and generation, but its day was past (Matth. xix. 7, 8). S. Paul (Gal. iii. 24) expressly says: "The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." We are apt to overlook the immense amount of good the Mosaic Law has done in the world's civilisation; the important part played at all times by such rules of holy living as it prescribes; the immense revelation it was in its day; the moral sense it developed; the noble and saintly lives it fostered. If we are to judge of the use of an institution by its abuse, it will go very hard by much that we ourselves hold most sacred.

We have seen that even the traditions with which the scribes overlaid the Law were originally prompted by the highest motives. Mistaken and deluded we may rightly consider the scribes and Pharisees now, but we may at least give them credit for the reverence of their original scruples.

There is more than this. We do the Jews a vast wrong when we judge them in the bulk by the standard of that militant and extreme minority which looms so large in our New Testament pages. In religion especially, as we see daily, it is not wise to judge a Church by the members of it who catch the public ear and eye. Elijah thought he was the only servant of God left in Israel. But what was God's answer to him? "I have left for Myself 7,000 men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (Rom. xi. 4; cf. 1 Kings xix. 10, 18).

We concentrate our eyes on the Jews whom our Lord rightly denounced. We forget the multitudes who always "heard Christ gladly" and towards whom our Lord was "moved with compassion,"—the simple, open-minded, receptive common people in whom He ever found responsive hearts, and to whom His own Heart went out in love.

We forget, above all, that large class of "meek," "humble," quiet religious souls, "Israelites indeed in whom there is no guile," represented by Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna,—to mention only those members of this large group who appear in the first two chapters of S. Luke. Would we know more about them? Then let us study the *Magnificat*, for no better picture of the spirit and character that was in these "poor in spirit" can possibly be drawn. Nathanael, Nicodemus, Mary, Martha and many more,—the very Essenes—prove that there were thousands of these devout souls scattered up and down Palestine, men and women who were watching for the "Consolation of Israel."

The "Consolation of Israel,"—this suggests another false indictment which we are constantly bringing against the Jews. We imagine that their idea of Messiah was of a purely material kind, something of this nature. Suddenly there would appear a King of David's line, who should redeem Israel from its oppressors, and reign in Jerusalem with royal pomp and splendour. All nations would

instantly bow down before Him, and the Jews would possess the riches of the Gentiles, who would be their ploughmen and vinedressers and lick the dust off Jewish feet.

No doubt, many Jews held these material views. Our Lord's own disciples did so up to the day of His death (S. Luke xxiv. 21. Listen to their despairing cry: "We trusted that it had been He Which should have redeemed Israel."

But among the nobler class of religious minds, the expectation of Messiah, though equally ardent, was of a far more spiritual kind. Besides Simeon, there were very many "righteous and devout" men, who were "looking for the Consolation of Israel" in the light of an Isaiah's Prophetic teaching.

There again, we forget that the Law did not form the *whole* Jewish Bible. The Jews had the "*Law and the Prophets.*" The Law was only *one* of the parts of *the* Bible read every Sabbath day in their synagogues, and "meditated day and night" in their homes. The lofty inspiring teaching of Deuteronomy and the Prophets—with their heart-searching moral and spiritual demands, ever insisting on the recognition of God as a loving but righteous Father,—formed, equally with the Law, the Israelite's rule of life. The later Psalms abundantly show that, in the case of the better portion of Israel, this deep, inward, heartfelt, spiritual life was part and parcel of the very being of many a Jew.

These righteous and devout souls had corrected

the materialism, not only of the Law, but of the current Messianic hope as well, by the light of the Prophets and the Psalms. Their Messianic expectations pointed to One Who should comfort them in their sorrow and save them from their sins, *and other nations as well*. "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (cf. Is. xlix. 22, xlii. 1. and lii.).

Let us be fair to the Jews. Who has made us judges over them? We condemn the casuistry of the scribes: have we ever read the annals of the Jesuits, or the pages of some of our earnest but bigoted Reformers?

We hold up our hands in horror at the cruelty and persecutions with which they hounded Christ and His followers. Do we forget the Christian Inquisition, the awful atrocities that have been done by Christian nations, Churches and individuals in the Name of Christ? Do Christians shut their eyes to the way in which they have out-Heroded Herod in their abominable persecution of the Jews themselves^b?

Before we sit in judgment on the Jews, let us first put ourselves in their place, orientalize ourselves, see Christ as they saw Him through Jewish eyes. Then we shall better understand Christ's.

^b See G. F. Abbot's "Israel in Europe." (Macmillan.)

own dying words : " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." S. Peter, a Jew, knew his own nation better than we do. He grasped the truth of Christ's words, and they sunk deep in his heart. He had caught the true Spirit of Christ when, almost in Christ's own words, he says to his fellow-countrymen : " I wot, brethren, that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." S. John and S. Paul say the same thing (Acts iii. 17 ; cf. S. John xvi. 3 ; 1 Cor. ii. 8).

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE HOLY LAND IN OUR LORD'S DAY.

IN a former chapter (II.) we said that we cannot dissociate our Lord from the place and time of His appearance on earth. Everything in connection with Him derives some of its significance from the locality and circumstances which gave it birth. Dr. Dale truly says: "Many people suppose that they may approach the Gospel-story as if the Lord Jesus Christ had appeared in Spain or in China, instead of in Judæa and Galilee."

We, therefore, propose to pass in rapid review the political, social and intellectual state of things in Palestine in Christ's day.

(1) *Political Geography.*

Palestine is a very small country. So true is this that one often wonders how such epoch-making events could have happened in so small a place. Palestine barely covers the area of one-sixth of England and Wales. But the Holy Land had the advantage of being almost in the very centre of the ancient civilized world. It formed the natural meeting-ground for the caravans, or trunk-lines of trade-communication between East, North and South.

The sea-coast is without good harbours except in the North. Consequently the Phœnicians monopolized the sea-trade, till the Jews got Joppa into their hands and converted it into the seaport of Jerusalem. This connection with the Mediterranean opened out a route to the West by sea, which was always available except for the winter months. In this way, through the great caravan routes, through Joppa its seaport, and by means of the excellent Roman roads, free avenues of intercourse were opened between Palestine, the centre of the then known world, and every civilized country.

It was, however, only its position that gave Palestine any importance in the ancient world. As a buffer-state, the Jews always found themselves sandwiched between two powerful neighbours who made the Holy Land their bone of contention. In early days, Babylon and Egypt disputed this prize, so did Syria and Alexandria afterwards, and finally Rome and Parthia fought for its possession.

In itself, Palestine was not only very small, but consisted rather of villages than towns. We have to disabuse our minds of all that the modern world means by a city when we meet the word in our Bible. Jerusalem, Tyre and Sidon were real towns in our sense of the word, both in point of size and importance, but most of the other places of note were only large walled villages or little country-towns.

Palestine is essentially a hill-country. Apart from the great trade-routes, roads have at all times

been very bad in the Holy Land and travelling difficult. (Cf. Luke x. 30.)

Palestine may be roughly divided into four counties. West of Jordan lie Judæa, in the South; Galilee, in the North; Samaria between the two. *Judæa* was ever the home of the pure-blooded Jews, the Jews proper, and especially was this the case in our Lord's day. Just below it lay the district of *Idumæa*. The Idumæans were really a mixed race, but were regarded as Jews in New Testament times. True, Josephus speaks of Herod, an Idumæan prince, as only half a Jew. On the other hand, when his grandson, Agrippa I., once resented the application to himself of the epithet in Deut. xvii. 15, "foreigner," the Jews cried out: "thou art our brother."

Samaria was loathed by all true Jews; so were its inhabitants, and for this reason. During the captivity, Babylon had planted a number of heathen colonists there. On their return from exile, the Jews were treated in a very spiteful manner by the Samaritans. From that day forth, the Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans and never allowed themselves to forget their impure origin. The Samaritans retaliated in a way which cut the Jews to the quick. They set up a rival temple and worship of their own on Mount Gerizim, thus severing themselves from all connection with Jerusalem. This was an open declaration of war, and all communications of any kind between the two districts

were cut off. The Jews insulted the Samaritans by word and deed on every possible occasion, and the compliment was returned with interest.

Galilee shared the same fate as Samaria at the time of the Captivity. So few Jews were to be found in it in the early part of the second century B.C. that they had to be brought to Jerusalem for their own safety (164 B.C.). At the beginning of the first century B.C., the people of Galilee were compelled by Aristobulus I. to become Jews, like the Idumæans, and at the time of our Lord, Galilee was mainly Jewish. From the admixture of foreign blood in their veins, and the number of Greeks dwelling in their midst, the Galileans were always regarded with a certain amount of patronizing condescension by the stricter and purer-blooded Jews of Judæa: e.g. "can a prophet come out of Galilee?" At the same time, the Galileans were very religious, made frequent pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and were ever ready to break into open revolt at the slightest hint of an insult to their Jewish religion.

By reason of its 240 cities and villages, and its closer proximity to the civilized world, Galilee was the home of commerce. As a natural result, the Galileans were the broadest-minded and most Greek-speaking section of the Jewish nation.

Peræa, east of the Jordan, was also a Jewish district, though the Jewish element was less pronounced than in Judæa, or even Galilee. Considerable tracts of *Peræa* were peopled by pure

Greeks, while others were half-Gentile, half-Jewish. On the whole, however, the Hebrew element prevailed. Consequently, Jews journeying between Galilee and Judæa preferred to go by way of Peræa. There, they were among their own countrymen. Samaria would have been a far more direct route, but passing through Samaria involved the certainty of insult (cf. Luke ix. 53), if not danger to life or limb.

(2) *Social conditions and occupations.*

Agriculture and pastoral occupations were still extensively practised in our Lord's day, but people were beginning to devote themselves far more to commerce, for which the Jew has a remarkable aptitude.

Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Rab well expressed Jewish views when they said: Commerce is worth all the harvests of the world, for there is no worse trade than agriculture. High-priests, like John Hyrcanus, and the Herodian princes after them, who personally engaged in trade, greatly raised the status of the trader in Jewish eyes.

In the New Testament there is not a word in disparagement of commerce, rather the reverse. The Essenes alone abjured trade on principle, but the rest of the Jews soon proved themselves the best and shrewdest men of business in the world. Everything was in their favour. All caravan-routes converged on Palestine. In Joppa they had one of the best seaports for shipping Eastern wares to the West,

while Palestine had valuable products of its own to sell. Thus Palestine could soon boast of its own merchant-princes, and its small traders were innumerable.

It was a common Jewish saying: Teach thy son a trade, or thou trainest him to be a thief; also: He that hath a trade in his hands is as a vineyard that is fenced. Many of the great Jewish Rabbis are known by their trade-surname, e.g. Rabbi Johanan the shoemaker, Rabbi Isaac the blacksmith. The two most illustrious Jewish Rabbis, Hillel and Shammai, were mechanics. Shammai was a mason by trade. He took a practical interest in his craft even when he was vice-president of the Sanhedrin and had an immense school of pupils of his own.

The principal trades in Christ's day were: smith, carpenter, mason, baker, weaver, tailor, tent-maker, potter, fuller, perfumer, jeweller. Tanners and butchers were the only occupations not highly respected. Spinning, sewing and weaving were mostly confined to women.

In Galilee, fishing was one of the leading occupations. The Sea of Galilee teemed with good fish.

Day-labourers, who had no land or fixed employment, hired themselves out at so much a day. The "penny" wage of the Gospels is really ten pence, and represented a purchasing-value of about two shillings. Josephus tells us that, when the Temple was at last finished, 18,000 artisans were thrown out of work. Employment, however, was somehow

found for them, and they received a day's pay even if they "only wrought one hour."

Slaves were practically unknown among the Jews in Christ's time. Field-work was done by hired labourers. In Jewish houses, free service was the rule for men. Girl-slaves were allowed, but they were treated as members of the family. It was only in Roman or Greek households in Palestine, or among the Jewish nobles who had adopted foreign ways of life, that slaves were to be found. It had become a fundamental rule in Jewish practice that no Jew should be held as a slave by another Jew.

Although Roman taxes were very heavy, the Jews were such a thrifty, energetic, shrewd, temperate people that they thrived and prospered in all grades of life. No doubt there were social extremes (e.g. Dives and Lazarus), but the majority belonged to neither of these classes, and, in peaceful times, led a happy and contented life.

Houses. Eastern houses are not like ours. People in Palestine lived much more in the open than we do. Artisans and merchants plied their trade in the streets or in open shops looking out on the street. A sheltered place for sleeping and a quiet spot for eating was all the home a Jew needed.

Nothing could be cruder or more primitive than the house of the ordinary Jew. Richer men, of course, had grand houses, but the humbler abodes of the plain man were very simple. They often had but one room, which sheltered both man and

beast. The roof merely consisted of rough beams, three feet apart, with reeds across, and mortar and earth on top. Thus it would be easy work for the friends of the paralytic to "uncover the roof where Jesus was, break it up, and let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay" (S. Mark ii. 4).

The furniture of such a house was also very simple: a table, some rude chairs, a few sleeping-mats, and large jars for grain, water, wine or oil.

These homes must have been dark, comfortless, and neither clean nor sanitary, as a rule. The main aim was apparently to secure coolness in summer and heat in winter, so the openings were few. In the parable of the "lost pieces of silver," the woman, even in the daytime, has to light a candle to search for them.

In the East, people live so much out of doors that there is no such thing as private life. All is publicity. Everyone knows all about his neighbour, so that literally "what is told in the chamber is soon proclaimed on the housetop." The crowded streets and the market-place are the Oriental's true home.

The Jews of old were very temperate, and their food simple. Bread was the staple of every meal, and over it was the blessing pronounced. Wine, very much diluted, formed the main drink. Parched corn and fish grilled on charcoal commonly accompanied the bread as articles of food. The usual posture at table was reclining. The door was generally left open during the meal, and, at a feast,

passers-by might enter the room and join in the conversation (cf. S. Luke v. 29 sqq., vii. 37 sqq).

Oriental hospitality is proverbial. Even when multitudes came from afar to the Passover, it was a boast of the Jews that no one could say: I have not found a bed in Jerusalem to lie in. Our Lord tells the Seventy that they are to take no money or anything with them, but to accept hospitality in every city which they enter. This innate spirit of Eastern hospitality explains why James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven even upon Samaritans for their churlish refusal to give them free food and lodging.

Inns, in the modern sense of the word, were therefore little needed in Palestine. But, as a rule, Jews were only hospitable to Jews. Now there was a very large foreign element in the Holy Land. Romans, Greeks, merchants, workmen, men engaged in the caravan trade, and so forth, were constantly going to and fro. Inns of various grades, for rich and poor, would therefore be a necessity.

The "inn" mentioned in the account of our Lord's Birth was one of the "caravansaries," or large buildings reared along the main caravan routes. There the many merchants, their suite and beasts, as well as the travellers in their company, could rest for the night. These *khâns*, as they are called, were ordinarily in the form of a hollow square (with a fountain in the centre), open above, and with a wall or arches all round it. Over this wall or these

arches ran a series of rooms approached by a stone staircase. The rooms were for the merchants and travellers. Muleteers, animals and baggage shared the arches and open space below. The apartments were mostly unfurnished, and lodgment for strangers could be had without cost, but the inn-keeper received a small gratuity.

Joseph and Mary probably arrived late, and found their proposed guest-chamber at a friend's house already occupied. Bethlehem is a very small place, and, on such an occasion as the great enrolment, there would be an exceptionally large crowd gathered there from afar. The parents of our Lord naturally went to the khân, but this was also full, and they had to find room among the muleteers.

Worship. In every village there was a synagogue. In Jerusalem, the number of them is said to have exceeded 400. They were more numerous everywhere than our Churches.

There were two officials connected with every synagogue, a "ruler of the synagogue," and an attendant. The "ruler" did not conduct the service personally, but it was his duty to choose or invite some of the members present to do so in turn. The "ruler" corresponded more or less to our church-warden. The attendant, or "minister" (S. Luke iv. 20), who was under him, somewhat resembled our parish-clerk.

* Our space does not permit us to deal with the Temple. The subject is too large, and also too well known.

Every synagogue had an *ark*, or press, in which were kept the sacred writings. Near this ark was a platform, with a lectern for the reader, and a chair for the speaker.

The principal service was on the Sabbath morning, but there were others during the week. The service opened with the reading of the proper sentences (Deut. vi. 4 sqq., xi. 13—21; Numb. xv. 37—41). Then came a prayer spoken by one of the congregation. This was followed by the reading of the Law,—a lesson which was divided into sections, each read by a different member of the congregation. Anyone who knew Hebrew could be asked to read it. Next came a lesson from one of the Prophets^b, also read by any individual selected by the ruler.

Originally, the verses of the Law and the Prophets were translated one by one, as they were read, by an interpreter who paraphrased them into the current Aramaic tongue. In our Lord's day, however, the reader of the lesson, after reading it aloud, expounded the passage in a sermon. Thus our Lord, at Nazareth, first selected and read a chapter of Isaiah, then closed the book, gave it back to the minister (attendant), sat down, and explained in an address the words He had read aloud.

Ten Jews, at least, must be present for the holding of public worship in a synagogue, and they must be

^b The Prophets were only read on the Sabbath morning, not at the afternoon service.

ten *men*, for women did not reckon^c. The strange thing to us in the synagogue service is that, even when a priest was present, the only part of the service which none but he could perform was the benediction at the end of it. The other portions of the service were open to all competent members of the congregation.

For moral and religious offences, a member of a synagogue could be excommunicated, i.e. excluded from all its services: e.g. S. John ix. 22, xii. 42, xvi. 2; S. Luke vi. 22 (cf. S. Matth. xviii. 17 for the Christian Church practice based on this Jewish precedent). There was also a minor punishment of scourging (Matth. x. 17; cf. Acts v. 40).

Education. The synagogue was not only a place of worship, it was also a school^d. The Jews had organized a splendid system of elementary education, but mainly on religious lines. Every village had its elementary school in the synagogue or an adjoining room. Attendance was compulsory. The teachers almost invariably belonged to the order of the scribes.

A child's first school was his home, his first

^c It is said that even a woman could take part in the reading of the Sabbath lesson as one of the seven persons required for that purpose. It was, however, considered very objectionable for her to do so, except in cases of extreme urgency. (Tos. *Meg.* IV. 226⁺; Bab. *Meg.* 23a.)

^d Indeed, even in its Sabbath-worship, "the main idea of the synagogue service was originally instruction rather than worship, for which in its associated forms the Temple was provided, and in its intimate forms privacy could be secured."

teachers his parents, in accordance with Deut. vi. 6, 7. Jewish parents did not shirk this duty. A father, according to Rabbi Salomo, might as well bury his son as neglect his instruction. Josephus tells us that "from the very dawn of his understanding, a Jewish child learned the Law by heart."

At the age of six, the boy went to the elementary school. There the only text-book was the Old Testament in Hebrew^e. Reading, writing, and probably arithmetic, were the subjects taught. Everything was learnt by "repetition drill." The idea was not so much to impart general knowledge as to give a sound moral training on a purely religious basis.

Girls were only taught at home, by their mother. They learnt to read and write, but above all "to fear God and keep His commandments." Their education was not confined to mental training, for they were soundly instructed in the care and management of a household. The Jewish mother placed before her daughter a noble ideal of womanhood: "Look well to the ways of thine household, and eat not the bread of idleness." "Let thy children

^e Buhl questions this. He maintains it only refers to the more educated classes and not to the masses. For if children learned in the boys' school to read the Law in Hebrew, and if this accomplishment was general, it would have been superfluous to translate the Hebrew lessons in the synagogue into Aramaic, as was invariably done. (Cf. the astonishment of the people at Jesus' learning, when they saw He was able both to read and expound the Hebrew text (Matth. xiii. 55; Luke iv. 16 sqq.))

rise up and call thee blessed; thy husband also, let him praise thee saying: many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all!¹

There were, of course, higher grades of education as well. Thus Josephus made a special study of Greek and classical authors. This was, however, discouraged by strict Jews. "It is not our way," says Josephus himself, "to accord any great appreciation to those who have learnt many languages. This is an accomplishment of which slaves are as capable as freemen. Among us, those alone are regarded as wise who thoroughly understand the law, and can expound the Holy Scriptures."

In Jewish eyes, the Bible contained all that was worth knowing: "Turn it over, again and again, for everything is in it."

As may be expected, it was only in the sphere of religious knowledge that the standard of Jewish

¹ In O.T. times women were held in high esteem, and they play an important part in Hebrew history. They were accorded much more freedom than in other Oriental countries. Although the husband was the "master," and the wife the "owned one" (Heb.), she held at all times the position of "helpmeet to man" assigned her in Gen. ii. 20—24. Strange to say, in the three centuries B.C., woman's freedom and the respect for her seem to have become less. In the Apocrypha we read, e.g. "the badness of men is better than the goodness of women." It is also said that Pharisees veiled their faces lest they should behold a woman or some unclean thing. But the free access of women to the synagogues, and the frequent honorable mention of women in the N.T., prove that their rights were respected among Jews, and that they moved freely in society. Although Christ and Christianity have immensely enhanced the dignity of woman, no Eastern (or even Greek) nation respected women as did the Jews.

education was high. They were people of "one Book," and outside Biblical facts they knew little or no history. Their geography was most rudimentary and their acquaintance with science was *nil*^g.

In *art*, they excelled in music and lyric poetry^h. These formed an essential part of their religion. The Jews would, however, have nothing to do with the sculpture or painting of living creatures. The second commandment expressly forbade it. Their idea of medicine was extremely primitive. They pinned their faith to simples, drugs, amulets and magic, for they were fully convinced that most diseases were due to "possession" of evil spirits, or demons, which had to be exorcised.

Language. The Hebrew tongue of the Old Testament had long ceased to be the vernacular of Palestine by our Lord's day. After the Exile, Aramaic began to force its way among the Jews. The old Hebrew language yielded only gradually to the new allied idiom, but, from the second century B.C., pure Hebrew ceased to be a living tongue, and sub-

^g "It was not till 200 years after the destruction of Jerusalem that the Jews began to fix the new moon on astronomical grounds. The Rabbinic idea of rain was that the clouds, like sieves, had holes through which the water fell. Thunder was 'as the splitting of ice in clouds when struck by the hot lightning.' Earthquakes were 'God clapping His hands, or sighing, or treading upon His footstool.' The heavens were a round dome over the flat earth: to this dome some stars were fixed, others moved along ways made in it for them."

^h See Article "Poetry" in Appendix.

sequently played the same rôle as Latin in the Middle Ages.

In the New Testament, therefore, the phrase "in Hebrew" means "in Aramaic." But Palestine was a bilingual country¹. It may be generally stated that every Jew who made any claim to higher culture understood Greek and spoke it fairly well. Even ordinary Jews, living in Galilee or in the vicinity of places where Greek was spoken, would doubtless acquire some familiarity with it from childhood. All the more so, as the Scriptures had been translated into the Greek tongue in the Septuagint version; and the frequent quotations from the Septuagint prove that even Jews found the Greek version more accessible than the original Hebrew.

Still, Aramaic was the prevalent tongue, especially among the masses; while some ultra-conservative Jews of high position would have nothing to do with a pagan language. Even Josephus, the great Jewish historian, says of himself: "I am acknowledged by my countrymen to excel them far in national learning, and I did my best to obtain a knowledge of Greek, though native habit prevented me from attaining accuracy in the use of it." Now if Josephus (37—100 A.D.) speaks of Greek as a borrowed tongue,

¹ Palestine was a *Roman* province, and John xix. 20 speaks of the inscription over the Cross "in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek," so we might naturally expect Latin to be spoken in Palestine. But the Romans never imposed their language on their subjects in the East, and Latin in Palestine seems only to have been used in official documents.

and experiences some difficulty in its use, this is as clear evidence as we need to show that Aramaic was the vernacular of Christ's day. Josephus gives us additional evidence of this fact, for he tells us that Titus had to avail himself of his help as interpreter when he delivered a Greek address to the people of Jerusalem.

What language did our Lord Himself speak? All the evidence points to Aramaic. In some of the most touching incidents in His Life (e.g. on the Cross) it is in Aramaic that He gives expression to His feelings (cf. S. Mark v. 41). S. Paul, again, in describing his conversion to Agrippa, says: "I heard a voice saying in the Hebrew (i.e. Aramaic) tongue." Now that the ascended Christ should have spoken to S. Paul in Aramaic is unintelligible except on the supposition that this was the tongue He spoke on earth.

On the other hand, there is nothing to show that our Lord was not familiar with Greek. As a Galilean, our Lord must have known it. Besides, how could He otherwise have conversed with the Syro-Phœnician woman, or with Pilate?

Political Constitution. As a Roman dependency Judæa was placed under the proconsul of Syria, who appointed a procurator, or lieutenant-governor, to govern and administer it. This procurator generally resided at Cæsarea on the sea-coast, but came up to Jerusalem for all great Jewish festivals, when riots might be expected. A Roman garrison occupied Cæsarea and many other towns, notably Jerusalem,

where the soldiers had barracks in the Temple-citadel of Antonia^k.

The Roman taxes were farmed, or sold for a lump sum to the highest bidder, who had to recoup himself as best he could. This naturally led to much extortion.

The lieutenant-governor was the highest legislative and judicial authority, and all the most important cases came before him. No sentence of death could be passed except with his express sanction.

In other respects, Judæa enjoyed Home Rule. This was administered by the high-priest and the *Sanhedrin*, or council of elders over which he presided.

The members of the Sanhedrin were composed of the high-priest, as president, supported by the chief-priests—(i.e. "ex-high-priests, as well as members of those aristocratic and privileged families from which the high-priests were taken." *Schurer*.)—and "elders" of the people. These "elders" were probably for the most part aristocratic Sadducees. The Pharisee element in the Sanhedrin was mainly represented by the scribes, though individual members of the other two classes may also have been Pharisees.

^k The Turrus Antonia was on an acropolis, separated from the Temple but overlooking it, and connected with it by passages and stairs. During the festivals, the garrison kept constant watch over the Temple, &c., in case of tumults (cf. Acts xxi. 35—40). In this

It is extremely difficult to define the functions of the Sanhedrin. In Maccabæan days, the Sanhedrin had the supreme powers of an imperial parliament. It was the highest judicial and legislative authority. Under Roman rule, the powers of the Sanhedrin were greatly curtailed, yet the Romans cleverly veiled the glaring fact. Roman imperial policy accommodated itself to the utmost limit to the national pride and prejudices of subject races, never interfering with the make-believe of Home Rule, so long as local authorities kept within reasonable bounds, and did not abuse their privileges.

Rome found the Jews with a peculiar government of their own. They considered themselves the chosen people of God, and knew no laws but the Law of Jehovah as formulated by Moses His Prophet. The Sanhedrin were the administrators of this Law. Tolerant Rome accepted the situation, and declined to interfere. The inhabitants of Judæa were allowed to govern themselves in their own manner provided that they acted peacefully, paid their tribute, and were loyal to their civil duties. The Sanhedrin was permitted to retain much of its old influence as an aristocratic assembly and high-court of justice. It dealt with all such cases as were not reserved by the Romans for their own decision or which did not fall within the province of the smaller local councils. Although its authority was now rather of an ecclesi-

fortress was stationed the one cohort (600 men or so) which formed the permanent garrison of Jerusalem, under Roman rule.

astical than civil nature, it was held responsible for the maintenance of order. From the Gospels and the Acts, we learn that the Sanhedrin had the power of arrest (e.g. Jesus ; cf. S. Peter and S. John (Acts v. 40)) and of scourging (Acts v. 40), but it could not sentence to death. The stoning of Stephen was a case of lynching.

The wisdom of this Roman policy of toleration and non-interference is nowhere better illustrated than in Palestine. Jews were convinced that the Council of the Seventy at Jerusalem (Sanhedrin) were the direct lineal descendants of the Seventy of Moses' day (Numb. xi. 16) appointed by Jehovah Himself. The Sanhedrin ruled by divine right. Therefore its every word was law, and its moral authority far exceeded its actual legal powers. The instructions of this august Body were regarded by all pious Jews all the world over as equivalent to commands. S. Paul, armed with letters from its president, the high-priest, addressed to the synagogues at Damascus, is enabled to hale Christian Jews "bound" to Jerusalem. A Jewish nation which acknowledged no King but Jehovah, no laws but the precepts of its own holy books, was, as may be imagined, a race not easy to govern. It was a master-stroke of diplomatic policy for Rome to retain all the actual power in its own hands while pretending to give Judæa Home Rule through its Sanhedrin. This diplomatic policy also explains Rome's readiness occasionally to sacrifice one of the

Herods, or even a Roman governor, to pacify the Jews.

Money. Roman and Greek coins were current in Palestine in our Lord's day, possibly also native copper coins. Sacred dues had to be paid in coins of still another standard, viz. the Phœnician tetradrachm corresponding to the Hebrew shekel.

Palestine, and Jerusalem in particular, were visited by vast numbers of Jews "out of every nation under heaven." Bankers, or money-changers, were therefore an absolute necessity. They not only changed foreign money into Palestine currency, but also took sums on deposit at high interest (Matth. xxv. 27). In their ordinary "exchange" transactions and loans, they were not over-scrupulous as to the commission they charged, but in the case of the sacred "half-shekel" the commission was legally fixed at 4%.

Gold, as well as silver and copper coins, circulated in Palestine in the time of our Lord: "provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses" (S. Matth. x. 9), but no gold coin is mentioned in the Gospels¹.

¹ Nine different terms for money are used in the New Testament:—

(1) A talent = £240
A mina ("pound") = £4 } These were sums of money, not coins.

(2) *Silver coins.*

Denarius ("penny") = 10d.

Drachm ("piece of silver") = 10d. } really 9.6d.

Didrachm (A.V. "tribute-money"; R.V. "half shekel") = 1s. 8d.

Stater (A.V. "piece of money"; R.V. "shekel") = 3s. 4d. (circ.)

(3) *Copper coins.*

Assarion ("farthing") = $\frac{1}{2}$ d. ($\frac{1}{4}$ d.)

Kodrantēs ("farthing") = $\frac{3}{8}$ d. ($\frac{5}{32}$ d.)

Lepton ("mite") = $\frac{1}{16}$ d. (?)

APPENDIX.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES.

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APPENDIX.

I.

New Testament Miracles^a.

THERE is no denying the plain fact that the Gospel-miracles are as much a stumbling-block to the scientifically trained mind nowadays as they were aids to faith to our more simple-minded forefathers. They run counter to all our experience and apparently contradict the established Laws of Nature. Therefore many readers will have none of them.

Every age has its intellectual virtues and vices. Ours is essentially a scientific age, and its chief intellectual infirmity is the fixed idea that whatever does not tally with our pet scientific theories is to be discredited. Unless a phenomenon can be subjected to a laboratory test, scientifically analysed according to certain prescribed methods, each element in its composition exactly determined by our finely-graduated rod or delicate weighing-scales, it is not worthy of acceptation. So scientific materialism decrees.

Needless to say, this notion is only a weakness of the scientific mind and utterly contrary to the true principles of science. Indeed, the greater and the

^a See also p. 290 sqq. *supra*.

more scientific a man is, the more free is he likely to be from this "idol." There is nothing so unscientific as a refusal to recognize facts because they seem to conflict with some theory to which we have pinned our faith, nothing so unscientific as a bias against evidence which favours some kind of fact that the investigator does not wish to believe.

The pet scientific theory of to-day is that such wonderful things as are constantly recorded in the Gospels, e.g. faith-healing, casting out spirits of evil, reappearances of the dead, extraordinary instances of control over the forces of nature,—do not happen and never did happen. Therefore some so-called scientific men have a most unscientific prejudice against the miracles of the New Testament. Unscientific—because we all know that wonderful things daily happen, and that our theory of life is so hampered by our extremely limited knowledge that it does not nearly cover things as they actually are in themselves.

No doubt, the Evangelists lived in a very credulous age. No doubt, legends abound in their pages. No doubt, as Dr. Sanday remarks, "if miracles of the first century had been wrought before trained spectators of the nineteenth, the version of them would be quite different." No doubt, the application of a true scientific method to miracles of primitive days generally, would result more often in disproof of the miraculous element therein than in its proof. Still, this is no reason why it should be

called more scientific invariably to attach more weight to evidence that tells against a wonderful occurrence than to evidence which tells in favour of it.

There are scientific men to-day who implicitly believe in telepathy, faith-healing and spiritualism. There are great thinkers in almost every department of knowledge, men to whom we look up as experts in their respective branches, who believe that some men and women to-day can read the unspoken thoughts of others, or can cure disease by the power of their spirit and their will, even as Christ did, only in a lesser degree. There are others of equal note who are persuaded that departed spirits can materialize and appear to us after death. They may be deluded visionaries, but till we have solved the psychological problems which the Psychical Research Society for instance, is now studying, it is unscientific to dogmatize either way.

Science disbelieves in miracles because they are isolated events not preceded by *material* conditions sufficient to produce them. But does not this beg the whole question? Are material conditions a *sine quâ non*?

One of the foremost scientific theories of the present day echoes the Christian belief that "the Universe is one whole, and God is the meaning of it. It proclaims the great truth which the Bible has declared all along: God is immanent in His world as well as transcendently above it. He is not only

its Creator and Controller, guiding the Universe as a helmsman who never leaves the tiller for one single instant, but it is His constant Presence in every particle of it that quickens it into life and binds the entire Universe into a living organic whole ^b."

If this is true ; if, as the President of the British Association (1908) says, "There is in all living things a something psychic, a faint copy of what we know as consciousness in ourselves ;" if this consciousness of our own, in its turn, is a faint copy of the Consciousness of God, what then? Materialism is bankrupt, and the gulf between the *natural* and *supernatural* vanishes with it. The chasm which we pictured to ourselves as existing between God and His World is not there. From the lowest form of organic life right up to God there is an unbroken line of continuity, and Plato's ideal is realized, "the mortal is woven into the immortal." The whole Universe becomes *spiritual* and is explained in terms of the consciousness of God, the Secret, Source, First Cause of all that *is*. If the Divine God-Soul calls into being, quickens and binds compactly together every single thing in God's Universe ; if man, animals, plants, matter itself are what they are simply because the God-Soul present in them creates, vivifies and unifies them one and all,—then All that *is* is the self-utterance, the self-expression of the Eternal I AM, I WILL, the self-existent, eternal, universal

^b See *Oremus* (Parker, 1908), where the present author has attempted to develope this thesis more or less fully.

Spirit whom we call God. T. H. Green was right : "The Universe is a World of thought-relations." It is spiritual and not material. All that we see is but God's Thought, God's Will, God's Spirit, God's Love actualized. All that our eyes perceive is the visible body in which the eternal Spirit is clothed for the time being, but strictly this body of inorganic matter has no reality. Moment by moment this clothing body "decayeth and waxeth old and is ready to pass away." It is no essential part of the true self of things ; it is a negative element, a practical fiction of the natural intelligence.

Here, if anywhere, lies for us the secret of miracles, of the Universe-riddle, if only we can guess or solve it. Personal spirit or consciousness, in God or ourselves, is the only factor that need be taken into our reckoning. God's Consciousness, His self-directing, creative, all-perfect Personality, Love Divine, is the driving-power behind evolution, and the key to it all. Creation is a never-ending process going on at the present moment. Every moment God is guiding His World-evolution, expressing Himself ever more and more. This he does so perfectly, and therefore so simply, that even we finite beings with our infinitesimal knowledge can detect and classify some of God's simple methods and we call them Laws of Nature. Here and there we laboriously spell out a word in God's great chapter, and conceitedly fancy we have solved the eternal mystery and carry the key to the Uni-

verse in our own pocket. All the while we seize on the husk and call it the kernel; we translate everything into terms of non-existent matter and exalt that into the only real; we have eyes to see the body and declare there is no soul; we are sure all is material and nothing spiritual.

No wonder we refuse to believe in Gospel-miracles. To the materialist, they are isolated events not preceded by material conditions sufficient to produce them. But even the man in the street can see that materialism is not the last word of modern philosophy. Even he can grasp the truth that there is practically no limit to the power of spirit over matter. By the mere exercise of his own will, he sets into motion, not only his own material limbs, but other people's as well. Through the power of his own personality, his own "I am and I will," he can and does produce a change in himself and his environment; he changes, alters, modifies persons and events.

If the absence of antecedent material conditions sufficient to produce a given event constitutes a miracle, every man is a miracle-worker. It is *will-power*, spirit acting on spirit and matter, that makes history. We see it dimly in ourselves; we see it "writ large" in truly great men. The magnetically telepathic force of a Napoleon can hardly be exaggerated. Great wills take the world as they find it, and, with a definite purpose in view, so combine and blend the human and material

elements at their disposal as to produce the result they intend.

Such geniuses certainly exist. Their achievements no man can scientifically analyse. They are psychological facts which can be explained in terms of spirit alone, not of matter, the only thing science knows. Such men are born into the world with a superhuman force. They produce incalculable results equal to these more than human powers. The scientific historian cannot explain them, neither can he deny them. They *are* "miracles."

There are human geniuses in every department of life. In the way of mechanical inventions and physical healing, human genius has triumphed over inanimate nature and the human body in a way that, before the fact, would have been incredible. The bare suggestion of such achievements would have been laughed to scorn.

Yet the "miracles" of to-day are not "supernatural." They do not run counter to the Laws of Nature. They are only the cunning application of known Laws.

Or do we mean to say that we know all the Laws, or rather all the forces that are at work in the Universe? When we say that "miracles are a breach of the order of nature," would it not be wiser and more scientific to add "so far as we understand the order of nature"?

God knows the whole Chapter of which we only know a few verses. Therefore if we wish to speak

with scientific accuracy we shall not dogmatize. Like Augustine, we shall content ourselves with the assertion, not that miracles are contrary to nature, but contrary to nature as we ourselves interpret it.

Psychology is still in its infancy. We are only just beginning to realize that psychology is a key fitting into the wards of many a lock hitherto baffling us, and, therefore, likely to open many a closed door in the future. It is impossible to assert anything with confidence on this deep subject, for we are still groping in the dark there. Still, that new province of knowledge seems to be a land of great promise. Meanwhile, till new light comes, it is well to suspend our judgment.

All we can safely say at present is that a miracle is an event which happens in a puzzling sort of way, contrary to our expectations: expectations themselves founded on our present knowledge of the course of nature. We do not know the links in the chain of cause and effect which have produced it, and because some of these links are missing, the whole thing does not hang together intelligibly. Many people will not believe what they themselves do not understand, therefore they argue, and cavil, and are out of all patience with all and any who question their verdict.

We do not know enough about the details of Gospel-miracles to speak dogmatically. Prof. Burkitt is of opinion that the evidence goes far to prove that "wonderful cures such as the healing of the

leper actually took place." Till our *data* are more complete, it is not unscientific to define a miracle as "an uncommon event, manifesting purpose, which cannot be accounted for by any causes known to us sufficient to produce it, and, therefore, we ascribe it to a higher intelligence."

II.

The Kenosis.

("Christ emptied Himself," Phil. ii. 7, R.V.)

How far did Christ strip Himself of His Divine prerogatives when the "Word was made Flesh"?

The classical passage on this subject is Phil. ii. 6, 8: "Who being in the form of God . . . emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the Cross" (R.V.).

Surely, if this means anything, it means that when our Lord took our flesh upon Him He voluntarily emptied Himself of the prerogatives of His Godhead, and became in all things like as we are, subjecting Himself to the limitations of the day in which He lived^e.

^e cf. Dr. Sanday: "When we speak of Christ 'accommodating Himself to the ideas of His day,' we do not mean a merely politic assumption of a particular belief for a particular purpose. We mean that the assumption was part of the outfit of His Incarnate Manhood. There was a certain circle of ideas which Jesus accepted, in the same

There are other passages supporting this interpretation: e.g. Heb. iv. 15: "For we have not an high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath in all points been tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Cf. Heb. ii. 17, 18: "Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren. . . . For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

What natural interpretation can possibly be put upon these explicit passages except that our Lord's was an intensely real Humanity? Within the purely human sphere of His activity, He of His own accord laid aside His Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience, so as to allow a real normal growth of human will, and human knowledge, and human experiences in Himself. Thus alone could He "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," sympathize with us in all things, understand us thoroughly in all our experiences, feel with us to the utmost in all our own trials and temptations. Thus alone could He show us that it is possible for a man to live on earth the life of God Himself, since He, Jesus Christ, "a man in all points like as we are," has done it.

To take one instance by way of illustration. It is this consideration, this literal "emptying of Himself" on Christ's part, which alone can give any value and reality to our Lord's Temptation. "In that He

way in which He accepted a particular language with its grammar and vocabulary" (Hastings' D.B. II. 624).

Himself *suffered* being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." The whole point lies in the fact that the struggle was a real one, that, as the writer to the Hebrews puts it, "*He suffered*," because the struggle within Him was so severe.

If we eliminate this struggle between the higher and lower nature in our Lord, the spirit and the body, then we fall back into *Docetism* and make our Lord's human nature unreal, His Body a mere phantom.

If our Lord was "*tempted in all points* like as we are," then, like ourselves, He must have inherited from His human parentage a tendency to do wrong. We ourselves certainly inherit it. On the other hand, unlike us, Christ from the very first triumphed over this tendency. It was there, but He would not yield to or indulge it for one moment by thought or deed. Thus the tendency never had the least scope for growth. It atrophied and died: "*tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin.*"

That the susceptibility to human temptation was present in Christ is clear from the form which the temptations assumed. As Dr. Sanday well puts it: "For us the story of the Temptation has a deep spiritual meaning: for us it expresses, if we may so say, the problem that presented itself to the mind of our Lord at the first outset of His Ministry—how He is to exercise the wonderful endowment of which He was conscious, how He is to discharge His Messianic mission."

The first Temptation is an appeal to satisfy natural cravings by supernatural means. The second comes in the form of a suggestion to prove the Sonship of God, just revealed to Him at His Baptism (hence the "if Thou be the Son of God"), by putting it to a supernatural test. The third prompts Him to make it easier for the Jews to accept Him as their Davidic King by falling in with their Messianic views of a triumphant Messiah.

By a deliberate and immediate act of self-assertion and renunciation, our Lord brushes aside one and all of these suggestions without a moment's hesitation. None the less, "*He suffered being tempted.*" He felt for that moment the pain and the pressure to moral evil, the struggle of resistance to it. We know that the Temptation came again after S. Peter's confession, and once more in an aggravated form at the Agony. In the strength of the God-Soul within Him, as it is in us all, He was enabled to face these Temptations, to come out of the fearful struggle more than conqueror, perfected through His very sufferings (cf. Heb. v. 7), "tempted in all points like as we are, *yet without sin.*"

Phil. ii. 6—8 also implies that when our Lord took upon Himself our flesh ("taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death"), He, at the same time, voluntarily divested Himself of His Omniscience.

Indeed, it is impossible to read the Gospels with

an open and unbiassed mind, without coming to the conclusion that no claim is made there for the omniscience of Christ. On the contrary, facts are recorded by the Evangelists which decidedly tend to disprove such a claim.

S. Luke ii. 52 (cf. ii. 40), "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (R.V.), shows that our Lord's intellectual and spiritual faculties expanded side by side with His physical growth according to the universal laws which govern mental development all the world over^d. As Westcott says in his commentary on the Hebrews, there is no period in the life of Jesus where we can say "at this point, He ceased to learn or to advance towards perfection."

S. Matth. xxiv. 36 tells us "Of that day and hour knoweth no one . . . neither the Son, but the Father only" (R.V.). This saying of our Lord so precludes the possibility of ascribing omniscience to Him that many ancient MSS. of S. Matthew have omitted the words "neither the Son."

A careful study of our Lord's own teaching on the subject of His Second Coming leaves a decided impression on the reader's mind that the expectation of

^d It has often been pointed out that, in the whole of His earthly life, physical and intellectual, our Lord was subject, even as we are, to the ordinary laws of nature. "If he violated these laws, even in the interests of His work, He had to pay the penalty which nature inexorably demands," e.g. Matth. iv. 2, Luke iv. 2, He fasted, and therefore hungered (cf. Mark xi. 12, Matt. xxi. 18); if He made a long journey, He was wearied (John iv. 6, cf. Matth. viii. 24).

His own speedy Second Coming was held and taught by our Lord Himself. e.g. :—S. Matth. x. 23 : “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come” ; cf. S. Mark ix. 1 : “There be some of them standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power.” Christ’s words on the suddenness of the Coming are equally clear, e.g., Matth. xxiv. 27, “as the lightning cometh out of the East, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be” (cf. 37 ; and Luke xvii. 20, 24). At any rate Christ gave utterance to words which left upon the minds of those who heard Him the clear and decided impression that He was coming again speedily and suddenly. This belief not only pervades the Synoptists, but is to be found on almost every other page of the New Testament writings.

In the matter of the current belief in demons and “demoniacal possession” there can be no doubt, says Dr. Sanday, that Jesus Himself shared the views of His contemporaries. Similarly, precisely because the “Word was made Flesh” in Judæa at a particular time and amid a particular environment, the reality of the Incarnation involves the limitation of knowledge which we find in Matth. xxii. 41—45 ; Mark xii. 35—37 ; Luke xx. 41—44, where our Lord assigns Ps. cx. to David, even as He accepts (Matth. xxiv. 37 ; Luke xvii. 26) the genuine historicity of Noah and the Flood, and the story of Jonah and the whale (Matth. xii. 40, xvi. 4 ; Luke xi. 29).

We know that our Lord constantly read the unspoken thoughts of His disciples and others, but some of our Lord's questions are also of the nature of ordinary enquiries, asking for information which He does not already possess, e.g. He asks of the father of the epileptic boy: "How long is it ago since this came unto him?" (Mark ix. 21; cf. John xi. 34; Mark v. 9, 30; vi. 38; viii. 5).

In all this there is nothing in any way derogatory to the majesty and Divinity of our Lord, while we do deny our Lord's perfect Humanity if we make claims for our Lord *as man* which He does not make for Himself.

Christ came to reveal the Father unto us. All questions about God, His Will, His purpose, His relation to man, man's relation to Him, Christ answers with full and absolute authority. "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any one know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matth. xi. 27, 28).

As a moral and spiritual Teacher and Revealer of the Father, Jesus claims to speak with absolute authority, and the witness of our own hearts unreservedly acknowledges that authority as final. But questions about the date or authorship of a Psalm, the absolute historicity of an Old Testament

event, the diagnosis of a disease, it was not part of Christ's mission to answer. The truth which Jesus came to reveal to us is not a knowledge of facts of science, or history, it is a revelation of God as our Father, our duty to Him and to our fellow-man. Our scientific and historical information we must obtain for ourselves by the exercise of our human powers of observation and inference, just as all that our Lord Himself knew in such matters He had learnt in the same way as any man of His day. Of His Divine omniscience in knowledge of that kind, our Lord "emptied Himself" when He took our human nature upon Him. There He must be interpreted through the thought and life of His generation, as Son of Mary, brought up in the home, and doubtless in the school, of Nazareth in the knowledge of His day.

And why should these limitations of Christ's omniscience in pure questions of literary, historical or medical information wound Christian feelings? Does this make Christ's Personality one whit less Divine? We might as well ask: Does His taking upon Himself our human body with its infirmities of hunger (Matth. iv. 2), thirst (John iv. 10, xix. 28), weariness (Mark iv. 38; John iv. 6), disappointment and anger (Mark viii. 12, vi. 6, iii. 5), astonishment, (Matth. viii. 10), temptation (Matth. iv.), or His being born as a babe of a mortal woman, wrapt in swaddling clothes, dependent on an earthly mother for the very means of His subsistence—does all this

make Him less Divine? No limitation can be more complete than our Lord's Incarnation, yet it is precisely the reality and intensity of our Lord's Humanity that appeals most thoroughly to our hearts. Not only does it assure us that we have One Who can be "touched with the feeling of our own infirmities"; but there is much more than this. The self-humiliation of our Lord in his Incarnation is one of the most Divine traits in His uniquely Divine revelations. It convinces us, as few other things can, that in this self-humiliation we have a loving God revealing Himself to man as none but a God of Infinite Love would have ever thought of doing. Reverent as their motives undoubtedly are, men do harm and not good when they refuse to ascribe to Christ the true manhood which is His. God is not least God when, in that supreme moment of His Infinite Love, He for our sakes becomes perfect Man in the Incarnation^e.

III.

Does the New Testament say the last word of God's revelation to man?

God is infinitely patient. From the Creation of the world, it was His Eternal Purpose to establish His Kingdom of Love on earth, but it took many

^e To the present writer, the lower the depth of the self-humiliation of Divine Love in the Incarnation, the more supremely Divine does it become. Were the Virgin-Birth disproved to-morrow, it would not shake his faith one whit, but confirm it all the more.

thousands of years to prepare the way for Christ its Founder. It will take as many more before we really grasp the truths of the Kingdom which Christ revealed.

Christ knew this well. He concentrated His main attention during His Ministry on the education of the Twelve, explaining to them what this Kingdom really is, and its Laws. But they were dull of understanding, as they themselves tell us, and oft did not understand. As He was parting from them, our Lord said to them: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth."

Was this gracious promise of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit the Enlightener in Christ's Kingdom made only to the Twelve, or is it addressed to all followers of Christ ever since? If this Holy Spirit the Enlightener, guiding men into all truth, has been present in the Church of Christ for 1,900 years, do we, or do we not see more truly into the meaning and teaching of our Lord's words than even His disciples did? Or, in God's Universe, is it in the Kingdom of God alone that there is no development, no growth, no evolution from the seed into the perfect flower? Is it there alone that to stand still does not mean stagnation and death? In other words, has no fresh light, no revelation from God come to us men since the Apostolic days? Or is not Revelation, even as Creation, a never-

ending process going on now at the present moment?

Even the most conservative Christians find a "progressive revelation" in the Bible. Does it end there? The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that "God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Has He never spoken to man since, or guided him into any further truth by His Holy Spirit? Can we believe that clearer and ever clearer shines the light as we come down the ages, and then God's Light to usward suddenly goes out about 100 A.D.? Is it a fact that with the last page of S. John, all that God had to say to man has been said, and Revelation ceases? In short, is the Revelation of God one small chapter in the world's history or does it pervade the whole of it?

In the light of after events, and guided by the Holy Spirit, the Apostles understood much in our Lord's words which had been dark at the time of their utterance, for their eyes were holden (John xii. 16; Mark ix. 10). Even after God had opened S. Peter's eyes to the fact that Jew and Gentile were equal in His sight (Acts x. 15), he forgot it at Antioch (Gal. ii. 11 sq.), and St. Paul had to rebuke him openly. In later life, in the light of history, S. Paul modified the views about our Lord's Second Coming which he had hitherto preached.

Now, none of us can ever hope to be the spiritual

giants the Apostles were, but even a dwarf can climb on to a giant's shoulders and see further than he does.

For 1,900 years we have had the Old and New Testaments, and the Holy Spirit has been pouring light upon their pages from every quarter all the while. He has actualized Christian truths, and guided us into their deeper meaning. Strange would it be, if, with all the advantages bestowed upon us during all these centuries, we did not in many respects see further into their own revelations than the inspired writers themselves, even though we have not a tithe of their zeal, loyalty and faith.

For instance, the prophets of the Old Testament are full of Messianic prophecies. At the time of their utterance these prophets themselves were, in most cases, only thinking and speaking of events which they expected in their own times, not six or seven hundred years after. Their prophecies had a twofold application, one near at hand, the other afar off. Their own vision was limited to the former. God saw further than they did, and made them say more than they knew. The Apostles, centuries later, interpreted the prophets' words better than the prophets themselves.

An Isaiah was probably far greater than a S. Mark or the author of S. Matthew, but, by the light of history, God's best interpreter, these New Testament writers saw further than Isaiah. So it is with us. We can read our New Testament in the light of history. There we have an open page in which we

can clearly read God's own handwriting. In history, God unfolds before our eyes His purpose and Will, i.e., the regeneration of mankind. As the world-drama is enacted before us, there, as clearly as in the Bible, we obtain an insight into the plan and ways of God, the righteous moral Governor of the Universe, the champion of right and truth, the avenger of wrong, our loving Father.

This is all we mean to imply when we say that we see further into their own revelations than the inspired writers themselves. New Testament writers expect and preach a speedy and sudden Second Coming. They look forward to see the Kingdom of God suddenly bursting forth upon an astonished earth, with Messiah appearing on the clouds of heaven to reign on earth awhile, and establish His righteous Kingdom. History has opened our eyes to truer views. We now see that the Apostles' words were truer than they knew. They were watching for a speedy and sudden coming in the future. It was already in their midst. There has never been a moment since Christ's day when His Kingdom has not come, only it is not, as they thought, a material and visible coming. God's Kingdom is establishing itself ever more and more on earth by the slow working of moral forces gradually bringing about the splendid consummation God intends. The heart of the new Kingdom is new men and new women.

It is the same thing with much else to be found

in New Testament pages. The Evangelists seem to have taken Christ's word-picture of Hell-fire as literally as they did His word-picture of the millenium. Similarly, S. Paul may have been perfectly clear in his own mind as to what he meant by "election" and "predestination," but his language, to say the least, is apt to mislead, and has misled thousands of others besides good Calvin. The Holy Spirit has poured His light into men's hearts and made them see what S. Paul tried to say. Once more, if we adopted S. Paul's views on marriage in 1 Cor. vii., it would soon mean the suicide of the race. He wrote as he did because at that period of his life he expected Christ's return in his own lifetime. Here again, history has enabled us to correct his views.

The Apostles stood too near in time to Christ. The seed He had planted had not yet sufficiently developed, the principles of His teaching had not yet leavened men's hearts enough to produce the rich fruits of His harvest which we are only now beginning to reap. For instance, the full bearing of our Lord's Gospel of Love in its relations to such questions as slavery, war, social questions, has only just begun to dawn on men's hearts.

But there is another side to the picture. If the Apostles had their limitations, so have we. If the first century had its infirmities, they are equally pronounced in the twentieth, only they are of a different kind. Our own subjective element is

abnormally prominent in our Bible-reading, and we too often read between its lines what is not there, finding in its pages what we wish to find. The Socialist discovers all his views there, so does the individualist; so does the fatalist and the free-will advocate, the Sabbath-breaker and the Sabbath-keeper, the Bibliolater and the Higher Critic. This is the natural boon or bane of our Protestant "freedom of judgment" which is the spirit of the age. We cannot escape this limitation.

On the whole, however, we have entered on a goodly heritage. There is no denying the huge strides made in morals and religion in the nineteenth century, the growth of toleration, the advance in knowledge. Still more, "the change of emphasis from a Christianity of right belief to a Christianity of right character and right social service has brought us infinitely nearer to Christ, has made us both more able and more willing to learn of Him."

IV.

The Resurrection of the Body.

[We had written an Essay on the Resurrection and Resurrection-appearances of our Lord, basing our argument on the evidence furnished by the Evangelists and S. Paul, when Kirsopp Lake's admirable book on the subject came into our hands. In his "Resurrection of Jesus Christ," the whole subject is so admirably and exhaustively discussed

that we must refer our readers to his book. He has anticipated all we wished to say, and stated it much better.

The Resurrection-appearances are now historically established on a foundation that can hardly be shaken. A Christian who does not accept these appearances as historically verified facts rejects them in the face of overwhelming evidence.

But, as Kirsopp Lake convincingly shows, the evidence for the Resurrection of the *Body on the third day* is not adequate to make belief in the resuscitation of Christ's material Body an article of the Christian Creed. The manifestation of Christ's Personality after death to His disciples and others is one thing, the resurrection of His material Body is quite another. The former we all fully believe to be a historical and indisputable fact. The latter is more than open to question, and the Gospel-testimony on the subject is most conflicting: e.g. cf. Mark xvi. 5 sqq.; Matth. xxviii. 2 sqq.; Luke xxiv. 4 sqq.

A Resurrection of the Body there will be. Some vehicle or mode of manifestation we must have if we are to remain our true real individual selves, and not be absorbed completely into God. But, as Sir Oliver Lodge well shows, not one atom of the material body will there be in the heavenly body in which we shall be clothed. Moreover, all material bodies imply resistance, and Christ passed through closed doors after the Resurrection. S. Paul's words

on the subject point to the conclusion we wish to establish. "We shall all be changed: flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God: neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." S. Paul did believe that Christ was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. But Kirsopp Lake clearly proves that, in his views on the Resurrection, S. Paul shared the current Jewish belief of his day. It was of this nature. "At the resurrection the body was changed from one of flesh and blood to one which was spiritual, incorruptible and immortal, in such a way that there *was no trace left of the corruptible body of flesh and blood which had been laid in the grave.*" It was a complete transubstantiation of the material into the spiritual. Every atom of the material body was used up and converted into its spiritual equivalent.

Such a book as Kirsopp Lake's is specially needed nowadays, if only for the reason quoted by a recent writer in the *Hibbert Journal*. "A recent curious episode in English and American Protestantism would be amusing, if it were not pitiable. The plot of an ill-written and meretricious popular romance turns upon the supposition of the discovery in Palestine of an actually forged but seemingly genuine inscription, calculated to disprove the reality of the Resurrection of Christ's Body. As soon as the knowledge of this discovery is spread abroad, the masses lose faith in the Resurrection, and with it in Christianity and its moral teaching. Moral

anarchy sets in, and the bonds of social order are only saved by the timely discovery that the inscription is spurious. Now this romance, instead of being taken as an elaborate joke, was received by the religious public with fervent enthusiasm, was preached about in the pulpits, and even canonised by an episcopal recommendation, as an edifying argument in favour of Resurrection-belief" (Prof. Lovejoy, *Hibbert Journal*, Jan. 1907).

If the Body of Jesus were to be discovered to-morrow in its original tomb, what would it matter? Our bodies are discovered in our own graves long after our burial, yet we know that our personality, our true self, is not there but risen. The sooner we persuade Christ's followers that "the Word" tabernacled here in the flesh, but that Christ's material Body is no essential part of Christ's true self, the better it will be. It is passing strange how the Jewish belief in the resurrection of the body has so indelibly stamped itself on the Christian mind that it has survived up to the present day as an article of Faith.]

V.

The poetical element in Hebrew literature.

Hebrew literature is full of word-pictures. The Jewish writers of the Bible look at the world through the atmosphere that floats before the poet's eyes. Their literature can only be appreciated by readers

whose poetic intelligence is in sympathy with its word-pictures, which enshrine its deepest thoughts.

Matthew Arnold defined religion as "morality touched with emotion." This is a totally inadequate conception of religion, yet there is a large element of truth in it. Religion, if it is true and real, is of the heart, and the emotional element in religion allies it with poetry.

Hence the Bible is full of poetry. The *Psalms*,—the "World's Great Lyric"—and the "*Song of Songs*," are artistic gems and the purest of poems. In *Lamentations* we have exquisite elegiac poetry. *Job* is a dramatic poem, so is *Ecclesiastes*. *Ruth*, *Esther*, *Daniel*, *Jonah*, are of the nature of poetical Jewish romance. Isaiah and most of the Prophets have all the fire and passion, the artistic form and rhythmical language of the truest poetry; while Genesis and the earlier historical books possess the poetic charm of Froissart or Homer. If we turn to the New Testament, it has already been noted that our Lord's biographers,—certainly S. Mark, S. Luke and S. John,—are poets and often set the story of His Life deep in poetry. Far be it from us to suggest that our Lord took any interest in mere literary form, but His ideal thoughts instinctively found expression in ideal language, and His parables alone prove Him the perfect poet.

Hebrew inspired writers were poets even in their actions. They not only thought but acted in vivid word-pictures. Isaiah walks, for three years, naked

through the streets of Jerusalem to show that Jehovah is going to strip and make her bare. Ezekiel takes a razor, cuts off his hair and beard, carefully weighs them in a pair of scales, burns a third of the hairs, cuts another third to pieces with the sword, and scatters the last third to the four winds—thus giving his spectators a graphic picture of the fate awaiting Judah. Jeremiah wears a wooden yoke round his neck, just as Agabus, 600 years later, binds his own hands and feet with S. Paul's girdle, as a warning of coming trouble (cf. Jer. xiii., xix., xliii. 9; Ezek. iv., xii., xxiv. 3).

With such intensely emotional and imaginative temperaments, it was perfectly natural to these religious Jews to see visions, dream dreams, and hear heavenly voices in a way of which we know nothing.

Isaiah (vi.), Ezekiel (i), Daniel (vii., viii., x.—xii.), Zechariah (i.; iv., v., vi.), S. Peter (Acts x.), S. Paul, (2 Cor. xii.), see heavenly visions as clearly as we see the most realistic earthly scene, while in the first two chapters of S. Matthew there are no less than five of these supernatural dreams (Matth. i. 20, ii. 12, 13, 19, 22). Again, Samuel, the Prophets, S. Paul on his way to Damascus, the shepherds, those present at the Baptism of our Lord and at His Transfiguration, all distinctly hear voices from Heaven.

The bold imagery of the Bible is the natural expression of these God-intoxicated children of Jehovah. These high-wrought passionate souls, who are in such close touch with the God-Soul, can speak

in no other language. For them, the "stars fight in their courses against Sisera." "The sun stands still upon Gibeon." "The Lord opens the mouth of Balaam's ass, and an angel stood in the way." This is not the *conscious* poetry and play of fancy we suppose it to be. This poetical imagery comes to them as naturally as plain prose to us.

It is precisely the same thing when we open our New Testament. Our Lord beholds "Satan falling as lightning from heaven" (S. Luke x. 18). In His Temptation, Christ is transported in a moment of time to the topmost pinnacle of the Temple, or the Devil takes Him up bodily into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him *all* the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them—and we English readers translate this bold imagery into bald prose!

We often marvel at the dulness of understanding of the Apostles in not at once grasping the meaning of our Lord's parables. We are amazed when the Jews pervert Christ's words, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up"; taking the words literally; yet we ourselves are daily doing precisely the same thing. By our prosaic literalism and lack of sympathy with Christ's poetic nature we have created endless gospel-difficulties for ourselves. Matter-of-fact slaves to logic, we take Christ's sayings: "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow turn thou not away"; or, "if a man smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also"; or the picture of our Lord's Second

Coming with its brilliantly poetical visions ; or the imagery with which He clothes the Day of Judgment, the bliss or woe of the souls in Paradise and in Hell,—and read into His words ideas that are not there.

Thus in our pedantic literalness we turn Christ's poetry into prose. We stupidly mistake the form for the substance, the frame for the picture, the garment in which truth is picturesquely dressed for the truth itself. Very truly said Hobbes : " Words are the counters of wise men, but the money of fools ^f."

VI.

The Didache.

In 1873 was discovered the *Didache* or "Teaching of the XII. Apostles," a document of supreme importance. The book falls into two parts. The first portion, "The Two ways," is a moral tract contrasting the "way of life" and the "way of death," the path of the righteous and the path of the sinner. In this part, Christians are urged to follow the golden rule of love and forgiveness laid down by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount.

The second portion of the book deals with the customs and institutions of the Early Church, and it is here that its supreme value lies. The reference to

^f The present writer has elsewhere dealt more fully with this subject ; see " *The Old Testament in the light of Modern Research*," Chap. II., and " *Sermon on the Mount*," Chap. XVII.

Baptism, for instance, is very interesting. It reveals the way in which the transition from total immersion to mere sprinkling took place. "Baptize in running water : but if thou hast not running water, then baptize in other water, and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither, then pour water on the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. But before Baptism, let him that baptizeth and him that is baptized fast, and any others also who are able."

The Lord's Supper is still part of the Love Feast, and the *baptized* members of the Church are to meet together every Lord's Day for "the breaking of bread" in Thanksgiving. But they must also first confess their sins *one to another* before partaking of the Cup and the broken Bread : (the elements are named in this order).

It is, however, when it comes to deal with the ministers of the Word of God that the *Didache* pours a flood of fresh light upon our previous knowledge. It proves conclusively that Lightfoot and Hatch were right in their conjecture that Episcopacy was not the earliest form of Church government. It only originated in the second century. The N.T. bishops were rather parochial ministers than diocesan Fathers in God. The ministers to whom the greatest importance was attached at first were the "prophets." These were not necessarily or even primarily people who prophesied,—they were simply, as the word means, "mouth-pieces of God,"

preachers, we should now call them. They received their call to office not from men by the laying on of hands, but direct from God without any ordination at all, except that of the Holy Spirit. They were not an order like bishops, priests and deacons. They were men (and women) to whom was specially vouchsafed the spiritual gift of preaching. They were not, as a rule, attached to any special church, but went from place to place preaching Christ with wondrous power.

In the *Didache*, the influence of prophets is on the wane, and there are already signs that their place is beginning to be taken by bishops. The bishops, however, are regarded as quite inferior to prophets. Stranger still, it is the congregation that appoints its own bishops and deacons! "Appoint for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not lovers of money, true and approved; for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and apostles. Therefore despise them not; for they are your honourable men along with the prophets and teachers."

We thus see that the *Didache* bridges for us the gap between the New Testament and the Christian Church of the Fathers. It shows us how the organization and simple rites of the Apostolic Church were already beginning to pass into the elaborate episcopal system of later days.

The *Didache* was written by a Palestinian Jewish

Christian some time between 70—100 A.D. We have abundant evidence that this book held a very high place in the esteem of the early Church. Clement of Alexandria (200 A.D.) quotes it as "Scripture," and it is mentioned in Athanasius' list of sacred writings.

VII.

Are the Revelation of S. John and the Fourth Gospel the work of one hand?

It has become an axiom in N.T. criticism nowadays that the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse cannot be by one and the same author. Their incongruity in style, matter and spirit is too pronounced. Now Justin says: "a man among us, one of the Apostles of the Christ, has prophesied in the revelation which was given by him" (*ἐν ἀποκαλύψει γενομένη αὐτῷ*). Therefore, if what these critics assert is true, the Gospel is not by S. John.

But does this radical incongruity between the Apocalypse and the Gospel really exist? We do not deny that the points of difference between the two books are very striking. *Ça saute aux yeux*. It would be a miracle if it were otherwise, for the Gospel professes to be a sober record of historic facts in the past, while the Revelation is an ecstatic vision of what lies beyond the veil of the future. In the Gospel we have the calm statement of simple historical memories viewed in the clear light of mature reflection. In the Apocalypse we have the

dreams of a visionary in days of persecution. It is a tract for hard times^s, couched in the language of fervid imagination, fiery enthusiasm, vindictive emotion. As we may expect, it is intensely figurative and explosive. The visions find their expression in the boldest and weirdest imagery, while the pent up and long restrained emotions of the "son of thunder" burst forth in the lightning and thunderbolt of his wrath against the persecutors who would crush Christianity.

A Gospel and an Apocalypse, a calm reflective record of the Life and an ecstatic vision of the Last Day, a Christ's Loving Advent as Saviour and His Second Coming in Judgment,—how can these two themes be approached in the same spirit? Is it any wonder that in style, matter and spirit the sober historian and the rapt visionary differ as they do? The marvel is rather that they have so much in common. No one but the gentle-passionate, calm-explosive John-Boanerges could do equal justice to such diametrically opposed themes, but his twofold temperament qualified him admirably for the task. We believe that the alleged incongruity between the two writings merely lies on the surface. Indeed, there is such a real and radical unity in the two that they distinctly reveal one man's signature.

^s We have seen (p. 175) that all Apocalypses seek to revive the drooping spirits of the faithful by revelations of a near future when, after one last dreadful onset of a hostile world, Jehovah would appear in the person of Messiah to crush the nations of the Gentiles and set up the Kingdom of Glory for His true Israel.

There is an organic connection between them. So much so that Baur calls the Gospel a "spiritualized Apocalypse," while many other German critics speak of the Johannine groups of writings as "standing to one another in blood-relationship," "all belonging to the same school of architecture, even though possibly not always the work of the same architect."

One other point should be borne in mind before we examine S. John's Apocalypse in detail. The Revelation is a "survival," a purely Jewish type of literature transplanted into Christian soil.

Ever since Daniel's visions, all Jewish apocalypses are based on his model. One and all, they have the same stereotyped symbolic imagery in common. It has become the traditional apocalyptic *mise en scène*^h. These revered symbols, the creations of rapt religious fancy, are regarded as common property, heirlooms. Each apocalyptic seer, as he puts on the prophetic mantle, clothes his visions in the same bold imagery as the Hebrew seers that went before him, even though it may for him have lost much of its old meaning. Indeed, the Jewish apocalyptic element is so pronounced in S. John's Revelation that most German critics will have it that John bodily incorporates a Jewish apocalypse in his own vision, merely giving it a local Christian colouring.

^h All Apocalypses are cryptographic, and speak in riddles. By means of images, symbols, mystic numbers, forms of animals, and so forth, they half conceal what they mean to reveal. In Christian days especially, in times of persecution, any but veiled attacks on Rome would have been fatal (cf. 2 Thess. ii. 3—12; 1 Peter v. 13).

Enough has been said to show that even in a Christian Apocalypse we must expect a strong Jewish and eschatological background. At times we shall fancy that the Christian is altogether buried in the Jew. A Messiah in Judgment triumphing over His foes and championing His friends will also bring out into relief the vindictive element present in every Jew. In a Christ and a S. John it assumes the form of a righteous indignation against all that is false and wrong, but it is there. We have not caught the spirit of early Christian eschatology if we have not grasped the fact that the Second Coming was regarded by Christians as a Day of Wrath as well as a day of the restitution of all things. Its watchword was "Maranatha," the Lord cometh! These prefatory remarks are necessary, for it is often said that the God of the Fourth Gospel is the God of all men and a God of Love, while the God of the Apocalypse is a Jewish God and all wrath.

External evidence. Justin Martyr distinctly ascribes the Revelation to the Apostle S. John. Irenæus is of the same opinion. The *Muratorian Fragment* declares it to be the work of John, the predecessor of Paul. Melito (170 A.D.) wrote a work on the "Revelation of John." *Theophilus* and *Apolonius* quote it. In 177 A.D. the Churches of Vienne and Lyons regard the Revelation as "Holy Scripture." *Origen* calls it Apostolic ("he (S. John) wrote also the Revelation").

Marcion and the *Alogi* denied the apostolic

authorship of the Revelation. *Dionysius of Alexandria* (255 A.D.), in an elaborate and clever critical treatise, argues that it cannot possibly be by the Apostle S. John, and *Eusebius* endorses his views. The Revelation is also one of the books absent from the ancient Peshito version.

General characteristics of the Apocalypse of S. John.

Its Theology. It is essentially cast in a Jewish-Christian mould. The Apocalypse is the most Hebrew book in the New Testament for reasons already stated. Even more than in the Gospel, the author thinks in Hebrew and writes in Greek. He is still (we presume that the Apocalypse is years earlier in date than the Gospel) steeped to the lips in his Old Testament. The wine is the old wine of the Hebrew Bible put into a new bottle. In *politics*, certainly, he is a confirmed Jew. He hates the heathen world with a surly hatred. His is an age of persecution. He himself has suffered; his race, his religion are trampled under foot by Gentiles. In the spirit of the Boanerges of the Synoptic Gospels (S. Luke ix. 54), he would like to call down fire from heaven to consume these Gentile oppressors. Hence Rome is the "beast," the "woman," and the Roman emperor (Nero redivivus) is the Antichrist of the Apocalypse. The "world" of the Gospel is now "the Gentiles" on whom God will pour the vials of His wrath, so that they shall wail. (cf. Ps. ii. 8, 9.)

On the other hand, as soon as we come to the

religious plane, all this is changed. We breathe a different atmosphere, the atmosphere of the Fourth Gospel. The exclusiveness of the Jew is gone, and the Christian gives the right hand of fellowship to all Gentiles,—not as tolerated proselytes, but as full citizens of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. Before the Throne of the Lamb stand “a great multitude, whom no man can number, *of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues*, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (cf. xi. 15; xiv. 6; xv. 4; and xxii. 2, “The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations”). The author breathes a spirit of absolute faith in the universal forgiveness of sinners of all nations through the Blood of the Lamb. It is a universal Christianity he preaches, free from all bondage of the Law. The word Law is never mentioned in the Apocalypse. Salvation is not tied down to any chosen race, it comes to all from the Lord our God, the Lamb now seated on His throne in heaven (vii. 10; cf. xix. 1). There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, bond or free. Oneness with the Lamb is the sole condition of salvation.

Thus it is a Christianity of the Pauline type, yet independent of S. Paul¹. Now this very element is

¹ Indeed many writers see in the Apocalypse a counterblast to Paulinism, e.g. in ii. 14, 20 (and perhaps ii. 9; iii. 9), S. Paul is the Balaam, the Jezebel who teaches men (1 Cor. viii.—x.) to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. As a matter of fact, S. Paul (cf. Christ in S. Mark vii.) taught that meats cannot defile a man, but he also carefully cautioned the Corinthians of the

so patent in the Gospel that, mainly on this ground, B. W. Bacon insists that the author of the Fourth Gospel is a Paulinist.

It would be idle to deny that the Apocalypse is written from a Jewish standpoint. The fact is evident. But it is the same kind of Judaism that we find in the Gospel. Christians are the only true Israel in both books. The author of the Revelation does not hesitate to call the Jews, in so far as they reject Christ, "Jews who are not Jews," and "the synagogue of Satan" (ii. 9, iii. 9).

The Christ of the two books is also identically the same. (1) He is pre-existent from all eternity. He is "He which is, and was, and is to come"; "the first and the last"; "the beginning and the ending"; "the first-begotten"; "the Alpha and Omega"; the "Amen"; "He that liveth for ever, Who created heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth," &c. (2) Again, even as S. John's Gospel tells us; "My Father is greater than I"; yet "I and the Father are one," so it is in the Apocalypse. Christ is subordinate to God (xix. 10, xxii. 9, i. 1, ii. 27, iii. 12, 14, 21), yet equal to God, for He has all the predicates and names of God ascribed to Him. (See (1) *sup.* and cf. v. 6 sqq.)

Thus the theology and Christology of the Apocalypse and the Gospel are completely at one. It is dangers which participation in idol-feasts involved. S. John in the Apocalypse and S. Paul are at one on this point. It is the heretical caricature of S. Paul's teaching (e.g. Antinomians) that the Apocalypse condemns.

a universal Christianity that is preached in both books, and salvation is only through the Blood of the Lamb, i.e., for those who are at one with Christ. In a Revelation of the Last Day, we naturally hear much of the wrath of God against liars, whoremongers, idolaters and so forth. Yet can anything in the Gospel surpass in the beauty of its divine Love the twice repeated "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (but see the whole passage Rev. vii. 15—17): or "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (cf. John xiv. 23)? Is it also true to say that there is no wrath of God in the Gospel, e.g. iii. 36; viii. 24?

Style of the Apocalypse. We have already said that the style of S. John's Gospel reveals "a Hebrew soul in a Greek body." The same thing is true of the Revelation of S. John, only more so. By reason of its essentially Jewish subject-matter and its earlier date it is Hebraic to a degree. But in the Apocalypse we soon discover the favourite Johannine expressions of the Gospel.

Vocabulary. The term *Logos*, *Word*, *Word of God*, constantly occurs in the Apocalypse, and *it is a term only found in the Johannine writings in the New Testament*. Surely, here is a clear bond of union between the two books, which in itself should outweigh all differences. Again, in both these writings, Christ is "*The Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.*"

Weiss and others have made long lists of words and phrases common to the Gospel and Revelation alike. We may mention, by way of example, the following, taken more or less at random:—*to testify, witness* (μαρτυρεῖν, μαρτυρία) occur thirteen times in the Apocalypse, yet seldom elsewhere in the New Testament except in S. John. *To overcome* (of evil and the world) is used seventeen times, yet it is almost peculiar to S. John. The same thing holds good of: *to keep the Word or the commandments, to hunger and thirst* (spiritually); *to make a lie*; *to dwell (tabernacle) among men* (σκηνοῦν); *to confirm, to seal* (σφραγίζειν); *living water*; *heavenly manna*^k.

Equally remarkable is the singular fact that the Apocalypse omits words which are likewise absent in S. John, e.g. repentance, Gehenna (μετάνοια, γέεννα,) though they are so common in other New Testament books. Similarly the word πίστις (faith), which occurs nearly 300 times in the New Testament, is very rare in this as in the other Johannine writings.

Much stress has been laid on the Aramaisms and grammatical "barbarisms" of the Apocalypse, as compared with the pure, if simple, Greek of the Gospel and its studious avoidance of Aramaic words. Such words and phrases as *Armageddon, Abaddon, Hallelujah, Amen, the hidden manna, "The Lion of*

^k Both Gospel and Apoc. give prominence to Zech. xii. 10, "they shall look upon Him Whom they pierced," and in their rendering of this verse both have exactly the same points of divergence from the Septuagint.

the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" are more pronounced Hebraisms than any in the Gospel, but easily accounted for by the earlier date and subject-matter of the Revelation. As it is, we may place side by side with them the Gospel Hebraisms of phrase and matter: "I am the living Bread which came down from heaven"; "the Lamb of God"; "Moses wrote of Me" "Abraham rejoiced to see My day," &c., &c. Many of the Hebraisms of the Apocalypse are only the poetic and figurative expansion of their more simple Gospel-equivalents, e.g., S. John's *Light* becomes in the Revelation "*the Lamp of the Holy City*"; *Life* becomes "*living fountains of waters*"; *Death* is "*the second death*," &c.

The so-called grammatical barbarisms are mainly the creation of critics' fancy. The author of the Apocalypse is accused of ignorance of the simplest rules of grammar because of such expressions as: ἀπὸ τοῦ ὃ ὢν καὶ ὃ ἦν καὶ ὃ ἐρχόμενος—ἀπο with the nominative! If this bold poetic stroke of genius to express the majesty and eternity of the indeclinable J", ὃ ὢν, is missed by prosaic critics, the fault lies at their door, not John's. In more than thirty instances in this book he plainly shows them he is well aware that ἀπὸ goes with the genitive. Objection is also taken to his anacolutha and false concords,—then what of S. Paul or Plato or any imaginative mind whose impassioned thoughts outstrip his grammar?

Conclusion. The Apocalypse and Gospel of S. John are creations marvellously different in character,

yet the unity and harmony between the two books is strongly marked. If Justin is right in ascribing the Revelation to S. John, the Gospel so distinctly bears the seal of its composition by the same author that any hesitation we may previously have entertained of its Johannine origin vanishes. The Apocalypse was apparently written years before the Gospel, in Asia Minor (Rev. i. 11). John's religious horizon had already broadened and his Boanerges temperament mellowed, but not to the extent apparent in the later Gospel. The Jew of Palestine is still very evident¹.

¹ S. Paul's sudden transition from ultra-Judaism to cosmopolitanism well illustrates S. John's similar experience after his residence in Ephesus. Goethe and Carlyle have also often been quoted to explain the difference of style between the Apocalypse and Gospel of S. John. In a published work, autobiographical notes are egotistic, out of place, in bad taste; but the present writer's experience is in a sense, so analogous to S. John's, and explains so much in this essay that he ventures to refer to it. For forty years a narrow Calvinist (= Palestinian Jew), and a local French *patois* his native tongue (= Aramaic), the present author has never quite cast off these trammels. He therefore readily understands the occasional Aramaisms and Jewish "survivals" of S. John's writings.

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For the sake of the other class, Mr. Cohn makes in Part II. a careful examination of the present position of physical and psychological science, and he does this well. He has that sympathy with all sincere inquirers after truth which is a necessary element of Christian *ἀγάπη*, and is himself too much imbued with the scientific spirit to avoid difficulties by accepting just so much science as is obviously convenient and explaining the rest away.

He insists on the Transcendence of God as a postulate for any theological expression of faith, and, having made this claim, he finds the solution of nearly all difficulties in boldly developing the doctrine of the Divine Immanence. We do not think he has developed it too boldly. Ps. xxxvi. with its parallels might be

quoted in defence of his suggestion that Professor Wallace's three stages of development may be reduced to two, and that there need be no 'chasm in organic life from the lowest form of organic life up to man its crown;' to which he adds that he 'would welcome a discovery that bridged the chasm between matter and life, thus making all development consist of one stage only, with Love Divine behind it as Evolution's key.' He confesses, with an honesty which commends his argument, that he does not offer 'a system logically complete, nor always uniform;' that 'no man can entirely escape from himself;' and that, though he has 'conscientiously endeavoured to meet scientific objections on purely scientific grounds,' he may nevertheless have read much into God's universe which he would never have found there had not his own spirit been steeped in Holy Writ and the psychology of S. Paul. It is possible that he has in fact read in something of this kind, and once or twice his argument seems to lose its well-knit vigour. But this may easily be excused by one who uses the book with right purpose, for the main point is clearly made—that prayer is natural to all who realise that 'the Universe is one whole and God is the meaning of it.' The strength of the argument is not to be measured by the weakest link in its chain, but by the steady convergence of many thoughts upon the reasonableness of making this venture of faith, which remains, as Mr. Cohu would allow, a venture of faith to the last. . . ."—*Guardian*.

"Mr. Cohu is the author, among other things, of a useful book on 'The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Research.' Somewhat in the same spirit he attacks the subject of prayer, that is, with a full and candid appreciation of the critical side. But with the 'Higher Critics' of the Old Testament he is in full sympathy, whilst his object here is to rebut the criticisms of the orthodox doctrine of Prayer. He bases his argument on true and solid facts: a belief in the Immanent, yet Transcendent, Consciousness always active in man and Nature; on man being *as a moral being* not reducible to the inflexible laws of Nature: on the inadequacy of reason, created by the soul for practical purposes: on the argument that if man can control Nature, how much more can God, &c. He has useful chapters on the prayer-instinct, the form of prayer, 'For what may we pray,' principles of prayer, &c. His treatment is comprehensive and lucid, and does not shirk difficulties."—*Times*.

". . . For all these reasons we warmly welcome the publication of *Oremus* by the Rev. J. R. Cohu, already known as the writer of

other valuable works. . . . Although comparatively brief the book is comprehensive. . . . The writer is completely abreast of modern thought and accepts its main conclusions. But he shows with great success and admirable clearness that these conclusions support, instead of being unfavourable to, the practice of prayer understood in the frankest and widest sense. The book is indeed more than a defence of prayer; within its compass it is an admirable statement of the case against naturalism. Still better, it gives an admirable exposition of the real meaning and true spirit of prayer. . . . We can conceive of nothing better than that ministers, local preachers and Bible-class teachers should master this little book. We recommend it to them with great earnestness, not only because of its intrinsic merits, but in order that they may take part in the most important spiritual undertaking of our times, the reinforcement of the life of prayer against secular encroachment, and its practice as the indispensable means of evangelistic and social advance."—Rev. J. Scott Lidgett—Leader on *Oremus* in *Methodist Times*.

"An interesting book from the pen of the Rev. J. R. Cohu. It defends by ingenious, often philosophical, reasoning, the efficacy of Prayer against the suggestions of agnostic criticism. It cannot but prove edifying to devout readers of the more thoughtful sort. It is highly recommended in a preface by the Bishop of Winchester."—*Scotsman*.

(This extract we quote almost in full, as coming from the leading *Jewish* paper.)

"A work emanating from the pen of so thoughtful and able a writer as the Rev. J. R. Cohu must interest not only the members of his own Anglican community but also those of other communities, whose religion is not one of habit and routine but of deeply ingrained conviction.

The book is divided into three parts, which are called separately :—
I. Biblical. II. Scientific and Philosophical. III. Devotional.

Each chapter is prefaced by an argument. If the matter is difficult, the way in which it is presented is clear and simple.

In each of the three parts, Mr. Cohu meets the difficulties that present themselves. He does this with great ability, and is not afraid of tackling very thorny subjects, in vigorous and well-chosen language. There is much originality of thought throughout the book, and the author does not overweight his arguments with too many references

to modern writers belonging to the Higher Criticism, although he has devoted much time and sympathy to their studies. He shows himself throughout a diligent scholar and an earnest seeker after truth, and it is these qualities, combined with a vigorous and lively style, that carry his readers with him.

To his mind, the three chief hindrances to prayer are: 'Wilful sin, selfishness and an unforgiving temper'; and he maintains that 'many honest Agnostics, seekers after Truth, whose hearts are true and their lives right, though their eyes are still holden, and they see not God, are very near to the Kingdom of God. Therefore it may, in a sense, be said that sinners, agnostics and heathen virtually can and do pray effectually to God, even though their lips may never voice a prayer to Him, because every man has within him a soul directly sprung from God, His Father; a soul which instinctively thirsts after God.' But, he continues, there is a sense in which sinners *cannot* pray, and this is explained fully.

Mr. Cohu shows us how he applies religion to the conduct of practical life, for he holds very firmly that true religion cannot be divorced from conduct. We feel that to him the fact is also very real that prayer, the constant habit of reverent and intelligent prayer, does conduce to conduct.

This short and very inadequate notice of so interesting and brilliant a work cannot, we know, bring the contents of the book really to the minds of those who have not, as yet, had the privilege of perusing it: but I venture to hope that it may tempt many to do so. Members of the Jewish community of enquiring minds and of scholarly habits must often be confronted and baffled by difficulties springing from scientific or other objections to this or that point connected with their religious belief or observances. Those who are afraid and run away from such difficulties, may some day find themselves in the sad condition of one who has lost shield and buckler, but those who go manfully into the fray, who are determined not to give up all that they hold dear—precious gifts and heritages of spiritual strength and comfort—will gain help and encouragement from the book before us.

The Bishop of Winchester, a ripe scholar of broad-minded religious views, has added to the value of the book by a sympathetic introduction."—*Jewish Chronicle*.

"We noticed not very long ago a remarkable work by the same author on the Old Testament in the light of modern criticism. The book before us has a different scope. It is addressed to believers, and it is in the main devotional. At the same time it fairly faces

the objections raised to prayer by philosophy and science, and attempts to show that there is no opposition between revelation as truly interpreted and science as taught to know her proper limits. The reconciliation is found in the doctrine of immanence, and the famous lines of the Sixth 'Æneid' might have been taken as a motto :

‘Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet.’

It need hardly be added that the pantheistic doctrine of an *anima mundi* is supplemented by the theistic doctrine of Transcendence. Mr. Cohu will allow no distinction between prayer for spiritual and material blessings. Mr. Francis Galton's proposed experimental test of prayer he brushes aside as an impertinence. We are fully agreed that the notion of a laboratory of prayer is alien to a religious man asking for a sign, a tempting of God, in the language of Scripture. But there can be no profanity in an historical enquiry. Have prayers for temporal blessings, for rain, for health, against plagues and earthquakes, been answered in the past? This, so it seems to us, is the only test that can satisfy science and one that religion cannot shrink. Schaff's illustration shall not have found a place in a work generally so sane and serious.”—*Journal of Education*.

“Mr. Cohu's work is more than a mere treatise on prayer. . . . He has provided a section for those whose prayer-difficulties are easily solved by a reference to the Scriptures, but the real interest of the work is in the part in which he meets the deeper objections presented to thinkers by science and philosophy.

In his treatment of these problems, Mr. Cohu shows a marked capacity for grasping the prevailing intellectual difficulties, and has the rare power in a high degree of presenting the Christian case in the particular aspect that is required to meet them. He deals fully with the many misapprehensions that exist as to the true nature of prayer. He meets fairly and squarely such well-known objections as ‘Why should we pray, when God already knows what we want?’

But he also goes further and answers the more difficult question: ‘Why should we pray when the laws of Nature are immutable, and even God Himself does not seem able to alter them?’

Mr. Cohu strikes us as being too favourable in the way in which he expresses the objector's position; but for this he amply compensates by the clearness and point of his answers.

The book reveals wide reading and much thought, especially in the

examination of scientific objections. The author shows that he is familiar with all that can be said on behalf of the objector, and can at the same time readily detect the weak points in the case. His section on spiritual things being spiritually discerned is one of the most interesting, and contains much that is most valuable in dealing with the subtle agnosticism of our day.

The devotional tone of the closing chapter shows that Mr. Cohu understands not only the theory but the practice of his subject.

This book ought to be especially useful to the clergy in dealing with the doubts with which the minds of so many thoughtful laymen are troubled. As the Bishop of Winchester says, &c., &c."—*Record*.

"... As the Bishop of Winchester truly says in his introductory note, the author states his views not only clearly but *reverently*. There is none of that cheap and easy dogmatism which some modern writers, dealing with a theme at once so universal and so profound, choose to affect. There is a true thread of devotion running through its pages, and this we thankfully acknowledge, even when and where we are bound to dissent from some of the writer's conclusions."—*Churchman*.

"Mr. Cohu has given us a very able book on a very difficult subject. It would be unfair to say that it is too philosophical; it is not, for, indeed, the difficulty itself is philosophical.

The instinct of prayer, as he truly says, is ineradicable. A cry for help to some Power not ourselves rises to the lips in times of need. It must be a very resolute thinker that can restrain it :—

‘ Lips cry “ God be merciful ”

That ne’er said “ God be praised.” ’

We should be inclined to recommend the average reader to begin with Chapter VII., described as an ‘alternative Chapter to Chapter VI.’ There the argument is stated in a simpler form, which he will probably find more effective. He will then pass on more profitably to the deeper reasoning founded on the Immanence and Transcendence of God, and on Personality. Mr. Cohu does well, we think, in refusing to limit the sphere of prayer. Let a man pray for what he wants, if he wants it with a clear conscience. A dullard will not ask to come out top in a hard competition, but every man may pray that he may be helped to show his own best self. And in cases of healing, what limits should be set? Where are the limits to what can be done by the invigorated personality of the sufferer or the inspired intelligence of the physician? Such

answers to prayer on God's part are but another instance of what we see every hour,—man subjecting natural powers to his own uses.”
—*Spectator*.

“Of late years, even Christian people seem to have lost sight of the full importance and efficacy of prayer. A book calculated to restore prayer to its true position is to be heartily welcomed, and such a book has just been given to the public by the Rev. J. R. Cohu, and cordially recommended by the Bishop of Winchester. The plan of the book is simple. The author deals with the Immanence *plus* Transcendence) of God in the Universe, and postulates that man's personality in soul is one in essence with God's Personality, and that the Fatherhood of God involves the brotherhood of man with all its responsibilities. He proves that the Universe is one whole, and that God is the meaning of it. The book is most lucidly written, but it occasionally deals with deep subjects, such as evolution, philosophically yet interestingly. It is an excellent book for all, but especially for ministers and teachers, and a storehouse of arguments which may be of service either in preaching, teaching or meeting objections. The man who may have lost faith in the power of prayer will find the work most useful. Even the doubter and scoffer will not close it without hesitation and heart-searching, or without admitting the great possibilities that are bound up in prayer. All Christians will find the last chapter in the book—some helps to prayer and some hindrances—most valuable.”—*Western Mail*.

“We remember reading with much pleasure Mr. Cohu's ‘Old Testament in the light of Modern Research,’ and expressing in these columns a strongly favourable opinion of it. Mr. Cohu has continued to keep up his deservedly high reputation for careful research and well-balanced reasoning. The author states his views in *Oremus* frankly, clearly, reverently. He does not shrink from the difficult problems that have been raised by the discoveries of modern science. He expresses his honest convictions, and his combination of a very reasonable explanation of present-day difficulties with the steady maintenance of deeply spiritual teaching is highly commendable. The volume deserves to have a very wide circulation. Its perusal will be of great advantage to thinking men with honest aspirations.”—*Perthshire Courier*.

“Some time ago we had the pleasure of reviewing in these columns another work by the author of this book, the Rev. J. R. Cohu, a work which, we know, has been most helpful to many. We, therefore,

took up this present volume with great hopes of finding it equally helpful, and we have not been disappointed. The attitude of the Determinist towards prayer is an intelligible one. He affirms that everything has been pre-ordained ages ago, and no amount of prayer can possibly alter the course of events by one jot or tittle. Mr. Cohu ably attacks this position as unscientific, and, taking up the real standpoint of modern scientific ideas, lucidly shows that true science is not the determined opponent of the doctrine of prayer that the cheap imitators of Haeckel, and a host of other unscientific and inaccurate persons would have us believe. The subject of the efficacy of prayer is one that touches us all, and Mr. Cohu's weighty 'Apologia' will bring comfort to many a distressed and harassed mind. We hope that 'Oremus' will be widely read and studied."—*Bristol Times*.

"The aim is to show that prayer is an instinct we owe to the very nature of our being, and the writer insists on the truth that prayer must be real and also translated into action. Then we are shown that we may pray for any object, provided the prayer is made in Christ's Name, with all that is implied (as explained) in that expression. Chapter IV. has answers to objections, and the answers are well put. To the people who are ready to pray for spiritual blessings, but not for material, the author rightly answers that the distinction is unphilosophical. We ask Him 'to perform as real a miracle when we ask God to cure the soul of sin, as when we ask Him to cure the body of a fever.' Scientific objections are treated fully. The last chapter on helps and hindrances to prayer is most excellent and suggestive. We do not endorse all that is advanced in these pages, but, taken as a whole, it is a book that will help many a doubter."—*Church Times*.

"A very lucid apologetic of prayer in the light of modern thought. The author's standpoint in the main is that of the Personal Idealist."—*Glasgow Herald*.

"We echo his Lordship's remark that the author has given us 'the results of careful and devout study.' It is an admirable and well-nigh exhaustive treatment of the subject of Prayer and its place in the Modern Religious Life. Besides a preface of ten pages, the eight chapters are grouped into three parts, viz.—(I.) Biblical. (II.) Scientific and Philosophical. (III.) Devotional. . . . The reader will find every subject in these chapters dealt with reverently and convincingly. We trust the book may be widely read, and wish it

every success it so well deserves."—*English Churchman and Church of England Pulpit*.

"It will prove of incalculable worth to the pious, the sceptical, and wavering classes. . . . It shows deep research and a scholar's able hand. It also fills a gap, and grapples with a subject approached by no other work, known to us, with the same thoroughness, depth, and reverence."—*Oxfordshire Standard*.

"This book, by a clergyman of the Church of England, impresses us as a really useful and suggestive contribution to its theme. The really satisfactory book on prayer has never been, and never will be written, for the reason that prayer is not a subject which can be argued in the ordinary fashion. But so far as dealing with prayer is possible, this unassuming volume deals with it most helpfully. Mr. Cohu treats of the prayer instinct, of theological and scientific objections to prayer, and of the devotional aspect of prayer, and under each head says wise and very luminous things. The author has his own way of putting things, and it is a way which has a novel aspect. It is a pleasure highly to commend Mr. Cohu's book, for which the Bishop of Winchester has written an introduction."—*British Congregationalist*.

"... Mr. Cohu argues closely and ably, and examines current scientific objections to prayer with great acuteness and power. His tone is broad-minded and unsectarian. The high commendation of the Bishop of Winchester, who writes a Preface to the book, speaks for itself. This book will repay careful reading, and prove very useful, especially to educated young men."—*Methodist Recorder*.

"The chief merit of *Oremus* is that it achieves a thorough treatment, and this in a brief form. It is not, however, the only merit, for Mr. Cohu deals with the problems of Prayer very carefully, and the Biblical and devotional aspects very reverently. No fault can be found either with his arguments or conclusions, although the author is unduly deferential to what has been pregnantly defined as 'Science with a capital S.' There should be a place for a work of this kind, and Mr. Cohu's book is decidedly well able to fill it."—*Methodist Times*.

"No one would care to deny the author's honesty and zeal for the House of God, for it is stamped on every page. One may say that the motive of the book is to get at the mind of the modern loose thinker, shaken as he has been by modern scientific argument, and to show him that in prayer, rightly understood, is to be found

the solution of the problems that trouble him. Nor can any one refuse to acknowledge the many practical suggestions given in order to the bettering of prayer. Clearly the last chapter on 'Some helps to prayer and some hindrances,' is written by one who has learnt about prayer otherwise than by theory or speculative study."—*Tablet*.

"A new and suggestive work, most timely and welcome. . . . The author's statements and arguments are so lucidly and tellingly penned that they will be readily grasped by even ordinarily thoughtful and intelligent readers. By painstaking and tireless research, and evidently fortified by long personal experience of the power and preciousness of prayer, Mr. Cohu has worked out prayer's problem, and met the scientific objections to it in a way which reveals alike in manner and matter a scholarly and reverent grasp of the subject. It is eminently 'a book for the times,' for it approaches a vitally interesting subject, not only in the best light of the present day, but also in a deeply reverent and Christian spirit."—*Bucks Herald*.

"We noticed last month a valuable book on the Old Testament by the Rev. J. R. Cohu; and now we are indebted to the same writer for an equally illuminating and useful book on Prayer, which we hope will have a very wide circulation.

We have been waiting long for a really able exposition of the work of Prayer from the modern standpoint, and at last patience is rewarded.

It might be supposed that an intense conviction of the necessity of Prayer for living the Christian life is hardly compatible with a clear and sympathetic understanding of the difficulties (scientific and practical) which so many earnest minds feel in regard to it; but this book shows that the supposition is needless.

We have never seen the difficulties more fairly stated and answered. There is nothing in this book of the special pleading that disfigures too much of popular apologetic."—*British Friend*.

"Mr. Cohu's previous work prepares us for the breadth and reasonableness that mark the book now under notice. He advances a number of arguments that take the edge off some of the objections so often urged, and he shows that the head, as well as the heart, has much to urge in vindication of prayer. Mr. Cohu is well justified in the emphasis he lays on the importance of consciousness and personality in relation to prayer. It is along this line that the modern mind is likely more and more to work in its endeavour to reach the heart of the problem."—*Christian World*.

“L'évêque anglican de Winchester présente lui-même au public l'ouvrage de M. Cohu sur *la place de la prière dans la vie religieuse moderne*, comme un ouvrage suggestif. M. Cohu pose franchement et nettement les problèmes en face des données de la science et des exigences de la pensée moderne, et il les traite avec clarté en homme qui a le sens religieux et le respect des vieilles doctrines et des vieilles pratiques.

... La partie vraiment personnelle du livre est la partie apologétique, Chapitres IV.—VII. où l'auteur répond aux difficultés contre la prière. Les croyants ont les leurs. A eux surtout il est répondu au Chap. IV. Les réponses sont bonnes et claires, les mêmes à peu près que donnent les catholiques.

Les Chapitres V.—VII. ne s'adressent plus aux croyants, comme tels, mais à ceux qu'a touchés l'objection scientifique.

Au Chapitre VI., position fort nette de la question. Science et religion ne devraient pas s'opposer : loin d'être incompatibles, elles se rendent de mutuels services. Et cependant, malgré des incises sérieux de rapprochement, on oppose encore la conception scientifique du monde à la conception théologique, l'une ne trouvant que lois inflexibles là où l'autre prétend reconnaître des traces d'une volonté personnelle, libre et aimante. Il est clair que la première ne laisse aucune place à la prière. Les deux chapitres qui suivent donnent la réponse, une réponse du fond pour savants et philosophes, en style académique, comme fait un professeur en chaire, parlant à des initiés. Elle oppose au système matérialiste du monde, qui n'explique pas la vie ni la conscience, un système semi-idéaliste, tout analogue au système bergsonien de l'Evolution créatrice. Dieu n'y est pas supprimé, ni sa transcendance niée ; mais c'est son action immanente qui fait tout évoluer en ce monde, et la raison même de l'homme n'est qu'une forme tardive et superficielle d'une conscience intime et personnelle, fille de la conscience divine, de même essence avec elle, et sous sa dépendance immédiate. A ceux qui ne comprendraient pas cette solution, l'auteur propose celle du théisme chrétien, d'un Dieu d'où dépend la Nature avec toutes ses forces, qui nous aime comme ses enfants, qui nous suit du regard, et qui agit en notre faveur dans ce monde et sur ce monde. C'est la bonne, évidemment, et le livre de M. Cohu, par ce qu'il dit fort bien, comme par ce qu'il n'explique pas assez, peut nous aider à en mieux saisir la valeur et la portée.” —*Revue pratique d'apologétique*.

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The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Research.

By Rev. J. R. COHU. Crown 8vo., 4s. net.

NOTICES OF THE PRESS.

"Mr. Cohu knows the whole history of Old Testament criticism. He is himself an ardent Old Testament critic. His book is the best popular presentation in English of the results of the last fifty years' study of the Old Testament, and of their reasonableness. It takes the place on the one side of the controversy which Prof. Orr's book takes on the other."—*Expository Times*.

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"For a compact and lucid statement of the modern view of the Old Testament literature, Mr. Cohu's book may with confidence be commended. It will be useful as a clear and unbiassed statement of the present position of Old Testament research. While accepting frankly the new view of revelation, the author is at the same time a firm believer in inspiration, holding that to be undoubtedly proved by the unity of Scripture."—*Scotsman*.

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those dealing with the Semitic races and the Mosaic books. . . . Whilst recognising that the author of the book is a sincere and believing Christian, we venture to recommend its close perusal to our Jewish readers; the book is full of information very pleasantly imparted, and deeply interesting."—*Jewish Chronicle*.

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"If we were asked to recommend a suitable text-book of the Higher Criticism in convenient form and lucidly expounded, we should certainly name *The Old Testament in the light of Modern Research*, by Rev. J. R. Cohu. No better hand-book of the subject could be desired. . . . On the whole, we repeat that if Old Testament

history is to be reset upon the basis of the Higher Criticism, the work could not be better done than Mr. Cohu does it."—*Methodist Times*.

"This volume is the result of a careful study of Scripture and the views of scholars on the subject. . . . It is a thoughtful book, and does great credit to the author's clear and sound judgment."—*Perthshire Courier*.

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"Mr. Cohu has mastered his subject thoroughly and states the arguments in favour of his positions with sobriety and candour. Even those of us who cannot adopt his conclusions must admire his thoughtful and reverent tone."—*Baptist Times*.

"In this, his latest work, Mr. Cohu has apparently burnt his boats, and definitely adopted the critical position of the extreme German School. . . . It must not, however, be assumed that there is no part of his book to which we can turn with pleasure and profit. There are, in fact, several chapters rich in suggestiveness, and of genuine value. The archæological student will find here a rich mine of rare information and ingenious argument. The account given, likewise, of current Jewish beliefs in the time of our Lord, and of the Eschatology of the same period, will be found most illuminating in their bearing on many obscure or difficult passages in the Gospels. We agree in the main, too, with the author's chapters on Revelation and Inspiration, while the Introductory Chapter, and the two which follow are deeply interesting and suggestive."—*Church of Ireland Gazette*.

"We welcome it cordially as a sign of the growing desire on the part of the clergy to bring their public religious teaching into closer accord with the results of scholarship and the growth of knowledge."—*Manchester Guardian*.

"A skilful and interesting account of the results of critical research. Mr. Cohu shows a true instinct in giving his opening chapters a range wide enough to include a view of the origin and development of religions generally. This is, indeed, an indispensable preliminary to the proper understanding of Israel's religion. Having laid so sound a foundation, Mr. Cohu builds an excellent superstructure."—*Christian World*.

"Works of this kind are by no means easy to write. The field to be covered is wide, and there is a danger of sketchy generalization and inexactness of statement. Mr. Cohu's book is not entirely free from such defects: but otherwise it indicates briskly and pleasantly the main results of modern research."—*Church Quarterly Review*.

"In the minds of a vast number of people criticism of the Bible has been equivalent to an attack on their faith, because to them every word of the Bible was divinely inspired and equally infallible. And a younger generation, finding many former views erroneous or even absurd, are inclined to give up all belief. Some are sensibly disturbed, and ask the old question, What then is truth? Others simply pass to tacit agnosticism. . . . Therefore we welcome a book which gives in short compass the main results of the Higher Criticism from the standpoint of faith, by a student of Wellhausen, Kuenen, Driver, and their school; who says that criticism will not destroy the Bible's 'deep and abiding comfort

and help, for its spiritual message remains untouched.' In this spirit Mr. Cohn treats of all the well-known difficulties, allegorical stories, and folk-lore, &c. . . . The moral aspect of the so-called moral difficulties of the Old Testament is carefully differentiated from the direct revelation of God. Human sacrifices, the universal venetia, the regulations for blood-revenge, the appalling cruelty of the Judaic laws, the ideas expressed in the figurative Psalms have (as he shows) a place in the development of all religions. Hitherto the average reader of the Bible has missed the great gulf fixed between the earlier crude religion and the later ideals of the prophets and the Christian revelation, because he has treated the Bible as one book, instead of many writings spread over a period of at least 1,500 years in their authorship. . . . Mr. Cohn's book should go far to dispel the difficulties which have arisen from that ignorant view which has treated the Bible as a sort of infallible fetish every word of which was divinely inspired, not only in a spiritual sense, but in all matters scientific and historical. At the same time Mr. Cohn states clearly the modern theory as to the true sense in which the authors of the Old Testament were inspired, noting the remarkable unity of purpose which underlies the Divine message throughout. . . . The book is not without inaccuracies, there are many unnecessary repetitions, some clear comparative tables of dates, and a good index are much wanted. These are matters for a general revision, before a second edition (which we trust may be called for) of this very useful little work."—*Academy*.

"The Rev. J. R. Cohn gives a very instructive, earnest and readable account of Biblical criticism. His book has in view the reader ignorant of, or perhaps repelled by modern Biblical scholarship, and its tactful and sympathetic tone should make it useful."—*Journal of Theological Studies*.

" . . . Written in so excellent a spirit, with so much sound learning, and with so pleasant a gift of lucid expression . . . "—*Guardian*.

"A successful and scholarly effort to show the reasonableness and historical justification of the higher criticism, and at the same time to emphasize the view that religion, so far from being endangered by the results attained, has had a welcome amount of light shed on it by the labours of critics. . . . The manner of presentation is often admirable, and the eloquence of the style is calculated to attract."—*Athenæum*.

“Mr. Cohu has focussed the numerous lights of the Higher Criticism with such ability as to illuminate for his fellow-labourers and for all earnest readers many of its dark places. The author has not tried so much to reconcile the old with the new, as to interpret the old by the aid of the new, to indicate its spiritual worth, quietly setting aside what is not reasonably tenable. . . . In his account of the origin and peculiar character of each of the books, Mr. Cohu displays a very great knowledge of the scholarly research which has so marked the higher criticism, and he has utilised his knowledge in such a way as to make his work of great interest as well as importance. . . . The book should prove inspiring and useful to those who are unwilling to discard their Old Testament, yet cannot see how reasonably to retain it.”—*Oxford Chronicle*.

“A careful attempt to gather up the scattered results of Biblical Criticism, and to reconstruct them into a connected and intelligible whole—a helpful book towards the attainment of a clear, scientific and intelligent view of the Bible; and towards the recognition in its pages of God’s moral government of the world in a uniformly consistent and systematic way right on from the very beginning. By the study of this book many will be enabled to find the Bible more intelligible, more helpful, and more spiritual than it ever was before: to read into it a deeper meaning, a clearer understanding, a stronger faith—and to be more ‘ready to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason’ for the hope that is in them.”—*Commonwealth*.

OXFORD: JAMES PARKER AND CO.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND CO.

"*The Sermon on the Mount.*" *From the modern standpoint.* (Skeffington and Co.)

"Surprisingly full of new and unfamiliar thoughts. Not all will assent to all the writer's critical conclusions. But all will welcome the strong ethical teaching, and the many illuminating thoughts which they will find in these discourses, and will recognize the learning which underlies them."—*Church Times*.

"One might have supposed that the last word, whether exegetical or hortatory, had already been said on the Sermon on the Mount. However, Mr. Cohu rather excited our curiosity by professing to give us his impressions 'as viewed from the modern standpoint,' and it must be owned that his book is considerably above the usual sermon volumes in intellectual grasp of his subject and in its power of penetrating thought. His guiding principle, which is to discover the sense in which Jewish hearers would understand the discourse, frequently sheds a flood of new light on several of its most vexed and debatable passages; and it strikes us that in the recognition of this principle lies the secret of much that is otherwise obscure or inexplicable. . . . It is much to the point to remember, as we are here reminded, that even S. Matthew's is a highly condensed report of our Lord's actual discourse, and that our accounts of it are very much at second-hand. . . . The "Bible Word-Pictures" is a most delightful chapter. Of the treatment of the Great Sermon in detail, it must suffice to say that Mr. Cohu shows the critical skill and acumen of an accomplished linguist in his endeavour to throw all possible light on obscure paragraphs or phrases. The work, as a whole, is characterized by ripeness and suggestiveness of thought, and will be found a useful commentary by all who desire a clearer and closer knowledge of these wonderful words of the Master."—*Church of Ireland Gazette*.

"Mr. Cohu is an ardent disciple of the Higher Critics. The practical parts of his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount (which he declares to be identical with S. Luke's Sermon on the Plain) are excellent."—*Record*.

"One cannot read the book without feeling in touch with a real and helpful spiritual influence."—*Scottish Chronicle*.

"The whole is a thoughtful comment on the deep teaching of the Sermon."—*Guardian*.

"These are practical addresses."—*Church Family Newspaper*.
(*The Author has unfortunately mislaid many other reviews.*)

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“This is so useful a book that we are glad to hear its first edition is practically sold out. The sermons are published exactly as they were preached, but they read exceedingly well. The author draws from many sources for his illustrations, which are always happily chosen.”—*Record*.

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“A set of simple, homely, straightforward addresses with admirable hints and suggestions which cannot fail to prove useful to all who wish clear and definite, straightforward teaching for their people.”—*Church Pulpit and Ecclesiastical Gazette*.

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“The author has not the least need to apologise for bringing before the public thoughts and ideas which are in a high degree instructive, refreshing and invigorating, intellectually and spiritually. The subject

is treated throughout with a masterly simplicity of style which could only be commanded by one who has fully grasped its deepest meaning. The teaching is uncompromisingly definite and very interestingly and convincingly put."—*Bucks Herald*.

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